

THE
MERMAID'S
MESSAGE
AND OTHER STORIES





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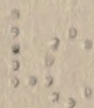


She selected the prettiest shells to send to the children.

The Mermaid's Message

AND OTHER STORIES

Illustrated by RUTH M. BISHOP



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The
Mermaid's Message
and Other Stories

THE MERMAID'S MESSAGE.

BY MAUD LINDSAY.

Down, down, down in the deep blue sea lived a mermaid. Mermaids are sea-fairies, and they have beautiful homes under the deep waters, with sponges and sea-anemones growing in their gardens, instead of flowers like our lilies and roses. They are very happy, too, and this little mermaid was merry all the time as she darted here, there and everywhere, joining the shining fishes in their play of swimming around to stir the ripples into circles.

Then, when she was tired, she would sit and sing while she made her crowns of coral and shells, or strung a chain of pearls which the oysters gave her. Sometimes, too, when the stars were out and the moon was bright, she would come up and ride on the backs of the great waves as the winds blew them far out after the ships or rolled them in to the shore.

One night, as she rode so gayly there, the ripples ran back to the shore with pleasant news to tell. "To-day," said the ripples, "we chased each other up on the beach, and there, playing in the sand, were the dearest little children; and when they saw us dancing with the sunbeams, they stretched out their hands to us, and oh! how we wanted to slip up and kiss their little feet! but we dared not do it."

"Dear little children!" said the mermaid. And the waves repeated it over: "Dear little children!" in such a big voice that it sounded along the shore with a boom.

Then the ripples ran away and the waves rolled on; but the mermaid still thought of the children, and wished again and again that she could tell them that she loved them.

At last she thought of something that pleased her very much, and she slipped down from the wave and back to her home, in a great hurry; for she remembered her stores of shells, and wanted to send them as a present to the children. So she selected the prettiest ones, smooth and twisted, lined with pink and

purple, and to one, the largest of all, she whispered a message, and she hastened up just in time to catch a great wave on its way to the shore.

The wave was glad to carry the shells, so she gave them into his keeping; and he tossed them far up on the yellow sand and they lay there waiting through the quiet night until the sunbeams came and brought the children out.

The children spied the shells immediately, and then there was such a rejoicing. Mammamas, nurses, and everybody had to look at each new treasure as it was found; and one mamma told about the wee creatures that had lived in each one long ago, while the children peeped into the pretty shell houses, and wondered how it would feel to have a shell for a home.

Then there were gardens to make, with broad, shell-bordered walks; and sea-weed to plant in the round sand beds; but at last a little boy found the shell that carried the mermaid's message, and when he held it to his ear, it repeated the message, soft and low like the sound of the sea.

Over and over it told the message as each child listened, and they *knew* that it *was* a message; and though they could not guess who sent it, or what it meant, they were sure it was a sweet one; and so it was, for the mermaid had said, "I love you."

"Let's whisper something to it ourselves," said the children, "the very nicest thing we can." And so it happened that a little girl whispered the words her mamma loved best, and they threw the shell far out into the water and it dropped down, down, down to the bottom of the blue sea, where the mermaid found it; and when she heard the message she knew the meaning; and it was just as sweet as her own had been, for the child had said, "We love you."

THE WOODEN HORSE.

BY LILLIE PARKS GUNNELL.

Hundreds and hundreds of years before the Christ-child came—so the legends tell us—when the people believed there were many gods who were so interested in the affairs of men that they often came down to help them fight their battles, and sometimes, alas! to punish them for their wrongdoings, there lived in a Grecian city called Sparta, the brave king Menelaus and his beautiful wife, Helen.

She was so wondrously beautiful that many people traveled from afar to see her. For the Greeks loved the beautiful, and particularly did they love to see a beautiful man or woman.

The poets wrote songs of her, some of which have come down through all the years to us, celebrating her surpassing beauty.

There came one time to visit Menelaus the king, Paris, the son of Priam, king of Ilion, which is known also as Troy. Paris admired Helen so much that he wanted to take her away with him to his father's city; so one dark night some of his men helped him carry her off to his ship, and then they sailed away across the blue Ægean sea to Ilion.

When King Menelaus found that his beautiful wife was gone, and that the ships of Paris were nowhere in sight, he knew at once what had happened. The guest whom he had entertained and made welcome had done him this cruel wrong. Then Menelaus was very angry. He called his trusted friends and brave soldiers together and lost no time in going aboard his own ships—for he was at the port—and setting sail for Ilion, in order to punish the wicked Paris and bring back the fair Helen.

When they arrived at Ilion they could not get inside the city, so they pitched their tents near by and waited.

In those days the cities had high walls built all around them (except Sparta, whose men

were so brave and warlike that they defended their city many years without the aid of a wall), and these high walls had great strong gates through which the people passed out and in. The gates were guarded day and night, and sentinels were always looking in every direction for any enemies who might come that way.

Though the Spartans watched and waited, they could not gain an entrance through any one of the six gates of Troy.

At last, after besieging Troy for ten long years, some one thought of a plan. They built a great wooden horse, hollow inside, and large enough to hold several men. Then they told the Trojans that they had decided to return to their own country. The wooden horse, they said, was built as an offering to the sea-god, to insure them a safe voyage home; and if, after they had left, the Trojans would take it inside their walls, the sea-god would always take care of them and keep them safe whenever they went sailing on the seas.

The Trojans were glad the seige was to be ended at last, and, believing what was told

them about the wooden horse, they were very glad to have it.

After the Spartans had put some of their bravest men inside the wooden horse and made believe that they had gone away, the Trojans came out and dragged it inside and locked the gates.

When all had become quiet, and the people were sound asleep,—for they thought that all danger was past now and that they could sleep in perfect safety,—the Spartans came out of the wooden horse very quietly, overcame the sentinels, and unlocked the gates. All the Spartans, who had turned round and come back again as soon as it was dark, came in through the gates.

The Trojans, being taken by surprise, were beaten; and Menelaus was very happy when he had his beautiful wife once more. He took her to his ship and they all sailed safely back to Greece.

They were very glad to be at home again, after having been away for so many years. And the Spartans were glad, too, to have with them their own Helen, the most beautiful woman in the whole world.

UP TO THE SKY AND BACK

BY KATHARINE ORR.

One day, just a little while ago, the great sun far up in the sky said to his little helpers, the sunbeam fairies, "Dear Fairies, I shall need a great many clouds next week; and I should like to have you help me make them." This made the fairies very happy. They were so happy that they ran back and forth from the sun to the earth a great many times.

They were very helpful little fairies and they were always happy when they were helping some one. The sunbeam fairies had helped the sun so many times that they knew just how to go to work. Some of the fairies ran down to a great, hot city and they found some drops of water on the stones and on top of some of the houses and they carried them right up to the sun just as fast as they could.

Some of the other fairies went down into the country early in the morning and they

gathered some drops of dew in the fields and some drops of water that were down by the grasses' feet.

The rest of the little fairies ran down to a little brook and carried just as many drops from it as they could.

By and by, the great sun said, "Dear little sunbeams, you have brought me so many drops of water that I have enough to make a great many clouds," for you know that the clouds are made of a great many drops of water.

After the great sun had the clouds all ready, he thought, "Now if the wind were here I am sure that he would blow the clouds just where I want them to go."

Soon the sun heard the wind coming and then he said, "Can you help me to-day? I've a great many clouds to send out and I want them to go to different places."

The wind said that he would be very glad to go. Then the sun said, "Away over in the city, the streets are very hot and the trees are thirsty, so please take these clouds over there and give the city a drink."

By and by, the clouds were right over the city, and soon the little raindrops went falling down on the houses and the trees and the streets; and they were all glad to have a drink. And the same little drops of water that the sunbeam fairies had carried from the city were now back in their old places just where they were before.

Then the wind went back to the sun and said, "Dear sun, I have taken those clouds to the city; now where shall I take the other?" And the sun said, "The farmers in the country would like the rain to make their grass grow; so take these clouds over into the country." The wind blew very hard and soon the clouds were up over the fields.

In a few minutes the raindrops were hurrying down on the fields. And, do you know, the same raindrops which the fairies carried from the fields fell on the same fields again! So the little drops of water were just where they were before the fairies touched them.

While the wind was away this time the sun looked down upon the earth and saw a little brook in which was just a little water, and he

thought, "The fishes in that brook need more water, so I will send a cloud over there." When he heard the wind he said, "Please take these clouds over by that brook." And the wind did so, and the rain fell down in the brook, and the fishes had plenty of water. And it is so funny! those same little drops of water which the fairies took from the brook fell right back into it again.

So, you see, the little drops went up by the sun and then came back again. And this was all because the little sunbeam fairies carried the drops of water up by the sun and because the wind blew the clouds just where the sun thought they ought to go.

So you see we have to thank the sun, the sunbeam fairies, and the wind for giving us, and everything on the earth, a drink.

FATHER TIME AND HIS CHILDREN.

BY MARY HELEN POWER.

There once lived an old man whose name was Time, and he had four children, two boys and two girls. The boys' names were Winter and Autumn, and the girls' names were Spring and Summer.

Now Father Time was very fond of his boys and girls, and he was always doing something to make them happy; but he believed that it was best for children to have some work to do, and not to play all the time. So he told Winter, who was the oldest, that he should expect him to look after the snow and the ice, North Wind and Jack Frost.

Winter was delighted with his work, for he was very fond of the snow, and North Wind and Jack Frost were particular friends of his; and many a merry time these three had together after their work was done. One of the things that they loved very much to do

was to freeze over the rivers and ponds, so that the boys and girls might have skating.

Summer, Winter's eldest sister, had a great deal to do, for she had all of the flowers and vegetables to care for; but it was a pleasure for her to take care of the flowers, because she loved them so much. She would coax the sun to shine warmly and the rain to fall softly upon them. Then the little flowers would lift their heads, and when the morning breeze passed them by, they would give him their very sweetest perfume, which was their way of saying thank you.

Spring was the little baby sister, and every one loved her very much, because she was always so happy and glad.

One day Father Time told Spring that she might take care of the little seeds that were lying fast asleep in the ground, and the buds on the trees. Then Spring was happy indeed, because she had been afraid that perhaps Father Time might think she wasn't old enough to do any work, and she wanted very much to help. So she made up her mind to do the best she could; and she sent the April

showers to awaken the little seeds, and then she sent the sunbeams to help them to come to the light; and the sunbeams and the showers helped the buds to blossom. So when the trees were all in bloom, every one said that Spring-time was the most beautiful time of the whole year.

Autumn-time, the youngest brother, was a very busy little fellow. He was very fond of bright colors, and sometimes wore a scarlet and yellow jacket. His work was to help the grains, the fruit, and the nuts to ripen. Now Autumn knew that this work was very important, and that the farmers depended on him for their harvest; so he said to himself, "I'll do the best I can, and I'll get the sun to help me." The sun was glad to help Autumn, and they worked very hard together; so that when the harvest time was over, and the farmers had filled their barns with the grain and fruit, they found that they had enough to last them until Autumn came again.

Father Time was very much pleased with his children's work. They all did so well that he never could tell which one did best.

FROST FAIRIES AND THE WATER DROPS.

BY ANNA H. LITTELL.

Sparkle, Bubble, and Ball were the three little water drops who lived down by the shore of the lake. When Mr. Wind came to see them, they had a very lively play. They would jump up high and chase one another. Then all the brother and sister water drops and a great many of the cousins would take hold of hands, jump up as high as they could, and tumble over on the white, clean sand on the beach. Then they had a nice slide back into the lake. Sometimes they played hide-and-seek, and slipped down under the pebbles on the beach and had a happy play.

But, best of all, they loved to play with the children. Little boys and girls with pails and spades dug many a well in the sand. Then the water drops had fine fun playing—falling

into the wells, then running away in the sand.

One bright sunny day, when Mr. Wind was asleep, the little water drops grew sleepy too, and lay very still.

Then two of the children, Robert and Ernest, took their rowboat from the boathouse to have a ride on the lake. The oars dipping into the water awoke some of the water drops, and they began to sing softly around the boat. "Ripple, ripple, ripple" was what they sang.

Then the Sunbeams, who had come to visit the water drops, smiled so brightly that all the little drops sparkled like diamonds, as they said, "Oh! Sunshine, we wish we could go far up to the sky with you. We've jumped as high as we could, but we always fall back again."

Sunshine said: "Do you want to go away from such a happy home? If you go with me you must travel a very long distance, but you will see a great many beautiful things, and learn to do many helpful deeds. Perhaps you may go to see the flowers, and help some thirsty plant to smile and grow."

"Yes, we want to go," the little water drops said. "Please do take us with you."

"Yes, I will," said Sunshine, "if Mr. Wind will come to help us."

Then the little water drops felt themselves rising slowly upward toward the sky.

And the children on the sand looking at them said: "Oh, see the steam going up!"

Then the water drops laughed, "The children call us steam,—what fun!"

But Ernest's mother said: "No, that is not steam, though it is something like it. It is our little friends the water drops taking a ride with the sunbeams. They are scattered into such fine bits that they look like steam. Some day they will come back to visit us."

"Good-by, little water drops," the children said. "We shall watch to see you come back."

Higher, higher up went the water drops. "I think we must be almost up to the sky," said one little drop. "We are near the top of a mountain. See what a big white cap he has!" The cap was a big snow cloud and the wind carried some of the water drops close

to the cloud. It was so cold that all the cloud children were busy making pretty white coats that were soft as wool. The water drops began to do the same work—just as the teacher, who was a frost fairy, taught them to do.

Up at the top of the mountain were some green fir trees and some little plants and vines with red berries. It was so very cold that the water drops, with white coats, flew down to help keep the roots warm. They looked like little white birds flying through the air.

The children saw them flying down, and shouted, "Here come the snowflakes. See, what pretty stars! Here is one with six points, and there is one with six sides."

"O ho!" laughed Sparkle and his cousins. "Now the children call us snowflakes. When we came away they called us steam. I wonder if they know that we are the same old playmates who used to sing and play by the shore of the lake."

Bubble and Ball and a great many of the cousins were blown far away from the top of the mountain to the rain cloud's home. The

little water particles clung closer and closer together till they formed round drops again. Then they began to fall.

“Oh!” said little Bubble, “here we go. I wonder if we shall see the flowers when we reach the ground. I should like to give them a nice drink.” But it was cold weather and the flowers were fast asleep.

Some of the rain drops jumped into the lake and others on the rocks and sand on the shore. They had a very busy time when the frost fairies came to teach them to make pretty white crystals that looked like stars.

The drops that had fallen into a crack of a rock found they needed more room to play at star-making. They pushed until the crack was wider, to make room for their star points.

Some water drops fell into a bottle on the sand; they were so crowded that they did not have room enough to make perfect star crystals. They tried to do their best, and pushed against the sides of the bottle until it broke. Then they had plenty of room.

The rain drops that fell into the lake began to dance and play with the little friends they met there.

"Where did you come from?" asked all the little friends.

"From the cloud land," said the little rain drops. "We lived in the lake before we went to live in cloud land. We went on a long journey with the sunbeams."

The frost fairies came to the lake, too, and soon all the water drops were busy making crystals. They worked away all night, and when the sun shone brightly in the morning, it looked down upon a hard, smooth floor on the lake, that seemed like glass.

Robert and Ernest came with their sleds and skates. When they saw the lake they shouted, "Hurrah! how smooth and hard the ice is!"

"Oh!" said Bubble and Ball, "the children call us ice now. I wonder if they know that we are the same old playmates who used to sing and play on the shore of the lake in the summer time."

MARCH'S CALL.

BY MAUD L. BETTS.

“Ho-o-o! H-o-o-o! !” March was certainly calling some one. Who could it be? The children came out; flew their kites, and rolled their hoops, laughing when the wind blew their hats off, and made them race down the hill after them. But still he went on calling. It must be some one else he wanted.

The birds were too far away, most of them, to hear him. Who could it be?

Down under the ground there was quite a commotion; little rootlets were spreading out this way and that, and there was such a whispering and laughing going on! What was the matter?

Why, March had been calling the flowers, and they were all awake, beginning to grow with all their might, and having such fun over

it that you would have thought it was all play. They were in a great hurry to push their way through the ground and brighten the world with their blossoms.

"Are you ready? It's time we were starting," called Snowdrop, her voice fairly bubbling over with laughter, at the thought of the surprise she would be when she popped her head up.

"Yes, yes;" called the others, "go on! We'll follow you."

"It's too cold for me to go just yet," said Crocus, "but I'll be there as soon as dear old Bluebird begins singing."

"I'll bring my silver and gold blossoms," cried Narcissus.

"And my bells will be ringing, before your blossoms fade," laughed Hyacinth; and even while she was speaking, two rootlets found a chance to creep down into the cool earth to find some food for the little plant.

Violet was so busily at work growing that she did not talk as much as the others; but the very first morning she popped her head in its violet bonnet above the ground and whis-

pered, "I'm here," the whole air grew sweet with her fragrance; and the children said, "Spring has come, for the violet's here."

Dear, brave little flowers! They never grumbled, all through the long cold winter that they had to stay under the ground. They were sure that the loving Father who gave them their work to do knew what was best for them. Their long resting time helped them to work better. So when March called they were ready to jump up and go happily and busily to work growing, so that soon they might brighten the world with their blossoms. No wonder they laughed and were so happy.

JOE'S ROSEBUSH.

BY HELEN MEADER.

You can see Joe, every day, standing on the corner selling papers. Now, who is Joe? Why, a little newsboy, and I want to tell you a story about him.

One day as Joe was passing along the street, with his papers under his arm, he saw in the florist's window a rosebush growing in a box. It was not a very large bush, but its leaves looked very green, and peeping out of the middle was the loveliest pink rose. It looked so proud, and seemed to gaze right in Joe's eyes, as much as to say, "See how clean and fresh *I* look, while you—yes, I can count two buttons gone from your coat, and I see dirt on your face."

Poor little Joe. He looked long at that pretty rose, and only left when he heard the other boys calling, "*Buy your papers! papers*

for sale!" He knew he must sell his papers, for if he didn't where would his dinner come from? When the whistle blew at twelve o'clock he had sold just eight papers, and then he knew he could buy doughnuts for his dinner.

As he was going to the bakery he stopped to take one more look at his rose friend. As he lingered before the window, a gentleman came up and stood beside him, and asked him if he thought the rosebush pretty, and if he would like it. Joe told him how he had wished for it that morning, but had no money to buy rosebushes. The gentleman (how kind it was of him!) paid a dollar to the florist and then put the box, with its pretty bush in Joe's arms. The rose nodded its head, as much as to say: "Glad you've got me! glad you've got me!"

It was hard for such a little fellow to carry the box up two long flights of stairs; but he went very slowly, and, when he reached his room, he put his rose friend on the window sill, then sat beside it to eat his doughnuts.

One morning Joe opened his sleepy eyes to look at his pretty rose friend, but this time how sad it looked! No bright face,—all the leaves had drooped and faded in the night. What *was* the trouble? As soon as Joe's little legs could carry him he ran to tell the florist his troubles.

Now listen to what the man said to Joe.

"First water, then fresh air, then sunshine, is what we give our roses; did you give these three things to yours, Joe?"

"Yes," said Joe, "all but the sunshine; and how could I give it that, when it never comes in my room?" sobbed the poor little fellow. "What can I do?" he thought. "I know; I know—the roof! the roof! I can put it on the roof!"

Out he ran, so fast that every one laughed. He found a nice sunny corner up on that high roof, away from everything but the sky and God's sunshine, and the next morning the pink rose lifted up her pretty face, and once more looked at Joe. And when the April showers came how nice it was to have the green leaves all washed so clean and bright!

One morning Joe had a great surprise. There among the pretty leaves was the dearest pink baby rosebud, all wrapped in its green blanket. You can see Joe's happy face every day on the corner, and if you ask the other newsboys why he looks so happy, they will tell you it is because he has a new baby rosebud on his roof at home.

THE GIANT AND THE FAIRY.

BY EVELYN LINCOLN.

Once upon a time there lived a giant in the land where giants live. There lived, also, a fairy among the flowers of the garden and in the mossy places in the woods down by the brook.

Now the giant was big and strong and powerful. He thought he had only to speak and everybody would do just what he wished. He always said "I won't" when anyone asked him for help. After a while he stopped smiling because he had said "I won't" so many times that his mouth was drawn down at the corners.

The fairy was tiny and not very strong but she was always smiling brightly and saying "I will," if people wanted her to help them. Little I-Will went to visit boys and

girls and she liked to see them smile and say "I will," just as she did.

One day the fairy, I-Will, lay down under a violet near the brook which tinkled over the stones like sweet music. She was soon fast asleep. Soon after, the giant, I-Won't, who was taking a walk, sat down beside the violet where I-Will was lying. The brook soothed him to sleep also.

That same day a little boy named Frank came with his nurse and sister to the brook to play.

"Let's play that we are fishes," said his sister. "No, I won't," exclaimed Frank.

The cross giant opened his eyes, looked at the boy and said to himself: "He is one of my kind. His mouth is drawn down at the corners, and he will be as cross as I am when he gets to be a man."

Then Frank said to his sister: "May, I am going to paddle in the brook. Will you?"

"Oh, yes," said May, "I will. That will be great fun."

The fairy I-Will opened her eyes and looked at May. She was such a dear, sweet

little girl that everybody loved her. She liked to help other people, and nearly always said, "I will."

While the children were playing, the giant had a great thought. He had no boys of his own, and wanted one very much, to teach him to be another I-Won't. So he sprang up, took Frank in his arms, and with great strides walked off to Giant Land.

"But I won't go!" screamed Frank

"That's just what I want you to say," said the giant.

Whenever Giant I-Won't asked Frank to do anything, Frank would say: "I won't, I won't, I won't! I want to go home."

Then the giants would laugh until the tears ran down their cheeks.

"Oh, no! you can't go home," said the giant. "You are too much like us, and nobody wants a boy at home who is always saying, 'I won't.' "

So Frank had to stay with the giants. One day he was crying very hard and wishing he could go home to see his kind father and mother and little May.

“Oh dear!” he sobbed, “I will do anything they want me to, if I can only go home.”

Just then a small voice whispered in his ear: “I am the fairy I-Will. This is the first time you have said ‘I will.’ Now, if you are sure you will help your papa and mamma, and do what they ask you to without saying ‘I won’t,’ you shall go home with me.”

Frank did not stop to look at the giant I-Won’t, but put his hand in I-Will’s and was soon at home, happy.

PUSSIES.

BY ANNA B. BADLAM.

What do you think I found to-day
Up in the loft among the hay?
What, but old Tab with her kittens three
Purring away so cozily.

Puss had been gone for a day or two,
Where she was visiting nobody knew;
Nor had she left a single trace,
Yet I had found her hiding place.

She glanced at me, gave a sleepy purr,
As I gently stroked her soft gray fur;
Then turned, with a look of motherly pride,
To glance at the treasures by her side.

She plainly said, "Did you ever see
Any lovelier babies than my three?
Sweet, and gentle, and loving, too,
They're the dearest children ever grew!"

“There’s White-paws with his fur so fine;
There’s Gray-back with a coat like mine;
And little Snow-ball, soft as silk,
With fur as white as old Moolly’s milk.”

All this I heard in her joyful purr,
As I stood in the loft and looked at her;
Looked at her and her kittens three
Cuddled away so cozily.

Down by the brook a willow grew
And in its depths a shadow threw;
Lo, on a twig, so small and slight,
My eyes beheld the queerest sight!

Three little pussies in coats of brown
Lined with fur as soft as down.
“What!” I said, in quick surprise,
As I gazed at the twig with startled eyes.

“Dare mother Tab’s babies run away,
And have they come to the brook to play?”
But the wind came whispering to my ear:
“Mother Tab’s babies are not here.

“Her pussies are cuddled safe in the hay,
These are willow buds at play.
They are fairy pussies, under a spell,
Listen, and I’ll the secret tell.

“Soon they’ll throw off their coats of brown
Lined with fur of softest down;
Soon every one will a *catkin* be,
The dainty child of the willow tree.”

THE FOX AND THE STORK.

ADAPTED BY ELLEN F. WIGGIN.

One morning a fox, having finished his breakfast, started for a walk in the woods in the hope of finding some friend to talk with; and, as he walked along, he met on the shore of a pond a stork resting on one foot.

The stork was quite willing to answer all the questions which the fox wished to ask, and, as he had a good deal of curiosity, he asked a good many.

After they had said "Good morning," and talked a little while, the fox asked, "How can you walk on one leg?"

The stork laughed. "Why," said she, "I never do walk on one leg; here is the other one tucked up here!" and she showed it to him drawn way up under her body. "It rests me to draw one leg up sometimes," she explained.

"Well," said the fox, "that is a queer way to rest. But don't you find it rather hard to manage two such long, slim, red legs? Your legs are much taller than I am."

"Oh, no!" answered the stork. "Now I could wade out ever so far into that pond without wetting my feathers, and you, with your little short legs, would wet your fur coat if you tried to cross a brook."

"But," said the fox, "what do you want such a long, broad bill for? None of the other birds have one."

"Why, that is my fishing net!" exclaimed the stork. "Don't you see? I put that way down under the water and when I take it up, the water runs out of these strainers here on each side of it, but the fish are left and I eat them. Some animals called men, fish with nets which they use in just the way that I fish with my bill."

The fox was so charmed with his new acquaintance and her instructive conversation that he invited her to dine with him the next day, and she very politely accepted.

The fox went home, and, while he was thinking what he should have for dinner the next day, the thought came to him: "Wouldn't it be funny to play a joke on the stork?" The more he thought about it, the more he wanted to do it; and at last, although he knew it was not a polite thing to do, he decided that he would play the joke. Accordingly, he worked very busily, and the next day when the stork arrived he was all ready. He invited her out to dinner, and what do you suppose that hungry stork saw? Why, nothing but soup served in flat dishes!

Now you see, with her long bill, she could not get even a mouthful, but had to sit looking on and trying to eat while the fox with his little tongue, lapped out all the dishes. She saw that he had planned this to tease her, without thinking how uncomfortable she would feel having to go without her dinner; but she was not in the least angry. She tried to be very pleasant, and when leaving, invited the fox to dine on a certain day with her.

She thought that the best way to punish him for his joke was to let him feel, too, how

uncomfortable it is to go without one's dinner when one has been invited to take it with a friend. But what do you think she did? I fear you never could guess, so I shall have to tell you

On the day that she had planned to have the fox to dinner, she rose early and flew about a great deal so as to have everything ready by the time he arrived; and when she asked him to her table I fear that he felt very much as the stork did when she saw his. There was no soup in flat dishes this time, but, instead, there was some very nice chopped meat which the fox was very fond of,—but it was served in tall narrow-necked bottles and the fox could only look at the meat. He could not eat it, for his nose was too short and too large around to be poked down into the bottles. The stork seemed to enjoy her dinner very much indeed; those bottles were well suited to her bill, and when she had finished, she smiled and said: “I hope you enjoyed dining at my table as much as I did at yours the other day.”

The fox felt very much ashamed, and, when he left, he said he wished very much that she

would come to dinner with him once more; he would try to make it pleasanter for her.

She consented, and at that dinner the fox was careful to serve what was meant for the stork in long-necked dishes, and only his own dinner in the shallow plates.

TIM'S CAT.

BY ALICE LOTHERINGTON.

Tim was a little boy with blue eyes, brown hair, and such rosy cheeks that grandma used to say he put her in mind of the winter apples that were gathered on her farm in the fall.

Tim was quite a little man. He had worn knee pants for a whole year, and next winter he was to have boots, rubber boots, so that he might go to kindergarten even if it did snow.

Tim's birthday had come. He was six years old. Grandma, Grandpa, uncles, and aunts had sent a number of presents, but the one that pleased the little boy most was papa's gift. And what do you think it was? A kitten. A soft, white, fluffy little thing, which looked like a ball of cotton, as it lay asleep in its basket.

Kitty had to have a name and after many talks with mamma and papa about it, Tim thought Fluff would be just the thing, she was so nice and soft.

So Kitty was named Fluff.

Fluff was a wonderful cat. You should have seen her skip and jump. In a short time she followed Tim just like a little dog. And when Tim whistled for her (you should have heard Tim whistle), Fluff would come to Tim as fast as she could.

Fluff had quite a number of playthings, but the one she loved best was a ball tied to a string. She would take her paw and bat it to and fro, jump and try to catch it, and have lots of fun

One day as Fluff was playing with the ball, Tim, who used his eyes, learned something. Fluff had only four toes on each hind foot. Tim thought that very funny indeed. He knew that he had five toes on each of his feet, and five fingers on each of his hands, so away he ran to tell papa about it.

"Why, Tim," said papa, "cats only have four toes on each hind foot and five toes on each front foot."

"Then," said Tim, "they have eighteen toes instead of twenty."

"Yes," said papa. "Bring Fluff to me and let us look at her paws."

Tim put Fluff on papa's knee, and papa told Tim to squeeze her paw gently

"Why," said Tim, "here are five sharp claws."

"Yes," said papa. "Within soft paws sharp claws are found."

Fluff thought Tim wanted to play, so she made believe to bite him, just for fun. "Oh! oh!" said Tim. As soon as Fluff heard Tim's voice she started to lick his hand.

"My!" said Tim, "how rough her tongue is, I wonder what makes it so rough."

"You know how sharp Fluff's teeth are, Tim?" asked papa. "All animals that have claws and sharp teeth like our Fluff, live on meat, or are flesh-eating animals."

"Now about Fluff's tongue. Run to the kitchen and ask mamma for some milk, while I mind Fluff."

Tim started and before papa could take hold of Fluff, the kitty was at Tim's heels,

and went into the kitchen, too. But she came back when Tim did, and was very glad to get the nice saucer of milk which Tim's mamma had given him for her.

"How quickly Fluff drinks her milk," said Tim.

"That is because her tongue is full of little cups, that are so small we can't see them," said papa. "When Fluff puts her tongue in the milk, the little cups get full, and so kitty is able to drink her milk quickly. These same little cups made her tongue so rough, when she licked your hand a few minutes ago."

Suddenly Fluff, who had seemed to be fast asleep on papa's knee, sprang up and jumped through a hole in the window screen, after a piece of straw that was blowing about the yard.

"I never thought Fluff could get through that hole," said Tim; "suppose she had stuck fast."

"Fluff knows better than that," answered papa

"How can she tell?" exclaimed Tim.

"Why, my boy, that is what her whiskers are for. If Fluff can get her whiskers through any place, she is pretty sure to get her body through, too. Her whiskers are to her what our fingers are to us. She feels with them."

By this time Fluff had come back, and she stretched herself on the rug at Tim's feet.

"Watch Fluff's eyes, Tim," said papa, "and tell me how they look."

"Why," said Tim, "the little opening in the center of the eye is long and narrow; not round like ours."

"That little opening is called a pupil," said papa. "And now, Tim, go and play with Fluff, as I have letters to write."

Away ran Tim for a romp in the garden with Fluff, who was as lively as possible.

When Tim was older his papa gave him a dog, and his uncle sent him a pair of rabbits, but there was no pet so dear to Tim as Fluff.

STANLEY AND THE SQUIRRELS.

BY KATE L. BROWN.

When Stanley went out to Brookline to live it was late in the fall. The trees had on their bright dresses, and the nuts were dropping fast.

The little boy was very fond of nutting. Every day he added to his store in the attic and talked of the fine times he and grandpa would have cracking the nuts on winter nights.

One day mamma saw him dragging his little express cart up the avenue, laughing and shouting with delight.

"O mamma!" he cried, bursting into the parlor, "I did find such a heap of nuts right in a hollow tree—low down. Why, they almost filled my cart!"

Mamma told Stanley to take off his coat and cap and put them away. Then he climbed up

into her lap, and they sat looking into the fire.

"Such a lot of nuts," sighed the little man; "*won't* grandpa be glad?"

"I wonder how they got there—so many nuts in a heap," said mamma.

"Dropped down from the tree, didn't they?"

"I don't believe so many nuts could drop in a heap just there," replied mamma.

"Perhaps some other little boy put them there."

"I think some other boy would carry them home, just as my Stanley did."

"Why, who did?" and Stanley's voice was perplexed.

"It must have been a little gentleman in a brown striped dress who lives in a tree."

"Do you mean the squirrels, mamma?"

"Yes, the squirrels. I think Mr. Chippy and his little mate gathered those nuts and laid them away for the winter with the greatest care. I can hear Chip say, 'See what a fine supply we shall have this winter for our four babies.' "

"Now they won't have any," and Stanley's voice was most sober.

"If you find another squirrel's storehouse, remember the hungry babies that must be fed."

Just then the little boy's nurse came to call him to supper.

The next morning Stanley was seen trotting down the avenue dragging his cart behind him. About half an hour later he ran in to his mamma with such a happy face. "I put every single nut back," he cried, with dancing eyes. "Now the squirrel babies won't be hungry, will they? Wasn't it a good plan, mamma?"

"A *very* good plan, I think," replied mamma.

"Wouldn't it be a good plan to put some corn in the hole, too?"

"An excellent plan, Stanley. Ask Jonas to give you half a dozen of the small ears."

So Stanley added the corn to the squirrel's hoard. One day he saw Mr. Chippy on the bough overhead with a piece of the cob between his little paws. A bright-eyed squirrel came down near him, and the two chattered away:—

“See that kind little boy down there, my dear. He is the one who put our nuts back and gave us this delicious corn.”

This is what mamma thought the squirrel might have said.

A STORY IN A CUP OF COCOA.

BY ALICE MAY DOUGLAS.

"I never saw such an old world as this is," said Miles. "Seems to me I've heard all the stories there are in this world, and I'd like to move to another. Why, I know the whole of Mother Goose, and I can say almost every story in our reader by heart."

"Why, Miles, I am surprised," exclaimed mamma. "This world is full of stories. You can find a story in everything in this world. Suppose you begin with the cup of cocoa you are drinking?"

"But, mamma, that can't tell me a story," laughed Miles.

"O no, replied mamma, "but I can tell you the story. It is this. One beautiful morning a sweet boy baby came to live in this world. He came to a home in Venezuela. That very day his papa was starting a cocoa

plantation. He planted the beans from which he was to get his cocoa in a nursery—not in the baby's nursery, but in a place where young plants spend their first years, until they are old enough to go out into the world.

“As the papa placed plantain leaves over the cocoa beans, he said, ‘Ah, here is a bean which I have not planted yet. I will plant this bean by itself and call it baby's plant. I will see which grows the faster, baby or the plant.’

“Seven days later the baby's papa visited the nursery and saw that the cocoa bean had sprouted. He also visited baby's nursery and he declared that baby smiled at him. ‘The plant and the baby are both growing very fast,’ he said.

“Two years later the papa was holding baby one day and the darling jumped out of his arms and rushed into the garden. ‘The pet is quite a child now,’ said the papa. ‘Of course, I can't keep him in one place. I suppose my cocoa plant wants to be moving about also, now that it is two years old. I will go and see it.’

“So the papa took baby’s cocoa plant and all the other cocoa plants, and planted them out of doors.

“He watered them carefully for two years and a half; then they began to blossom. And the finest blossoms were on baby’s plant, or rather on baby’s tree.

“Four months later the blossoms turned into fruit. In due time baby’s papa gathered the fruit. It was about an inch long and of a violet color. The fruit had white meat and contained twenty-five seeds. Baby had the first cup of cocoa that was made from those seeds, and who knows but that you are drinking the last?”

“Perhaps I am,” said Miles

POLLY'S CLOCK.

BY MARY C. SOULE.

This clock was a real friend to little Polly, and probably you suppose it was in her home. But no, it was not one of those little mantel clocks that tick so very fast that they seem to say, not "tick, tick," but "quick, quick," or "time flies, time is passing"; neither was it a tall old-fashioned clock, much taller than Polly herself, with a round rosy face and large figures which tell the time; neither was it a clock with a cuckoo coming out every hour. This friend of Polly's was on the steeple of a town hall near her house, and the hands were so large and the figures so clear that one could see the time even if he were off on the hills which surrounded the town. And at night an electric light burned behind the clock-face and made the figures as plain as in the daytime.

Polly's friend saw much that was going on in the world, for the town hall stood opposite the church and behind the church was a large schoolhouse. When the hands pointed to twelve o'clock, such a troop of noisy children as passed up the street. And on Sunday when the church bell began to toll, the clock looked down on old and young, going to the service. Early in the morning on week days, came men with dinner pails going to their work, and sometimes at noon boys and girls carried these pails to their fathers, in the shops, that they might have a warm dinner.

In winter the sleighs went flying by right under the clock, and the bells tinkled merrily as if to say: "We can make music, too, old clock, even if we can't make it every hour."

In the summer the carriages passed under the clock, the horses with their fly nets on, while the sun poured down on the peoples' heads. The clock seemed to Polly to say: "Never mind, Black Beauties, when my hands point straight down at you, at half-past six, the air will be cooler."

The bank was next to the town hall, and so the clock saw money going in and out, although, of course, it couldn't see the bank-bills and the silver dollars that the people put in their pockets. Every Thursday morning a team came from one of the factories and carried away a big bag of money, which was to be paid to the workmen.

Polly used to watch all these things that the clock saw, and she would look up to see what it was thinking about; for to Polly, with her childish imagination, the clock seemed a real person, and its round glass face was her friend's face.

If you have never seen an illuminated clock, you would have been surprised indeed to look from the window in the evening and see the dark street, the stars up above, and between them this round face hung in mid-air.

Now Polly, as I told you, had much imagination. Perhaps she had a little more than most children. She saw many things in her mind; and the longer she watched the clock, the more friendly it grew to her. If she so far

forgot herself as to make up a face when the weather was stormy and she could not go out to play, she would look up at the clock, and his calm face seemed to say: "For shame, Polly, *you* making up a face at this nice rain, which is going to make your flower seeds grow and your papa's lettuce come up! For shame to put on a pouting face because you can't go out! What do you think of me? I can never go down in the street to look carefully at the pigeons picking up their crumbs. I always have to look at them from away up here, and you can do as much as that to-day by looking out of your window. Why, you can stand at your window and see enough to make any girl happy. Suppose that I should put on a wry face because I am out in the rain with the drops splashing against my face, what would you think, and what would the children think, as they hurried along to school?"

This was a long speech for the clock to make, and Polly was glad that it stopped to strike the hour, for she felt a little ashamed of herself, and, by the time the clock had finished striking, her face had cleared.

One day little Polly could not see her old friend as she looked out of the window. Nothing had happened to the clock, I can assure you. The trouble was with Polly herself. Her eyes were full of tears, and yet, if you had known what was the matter, you could not have felt so very, very sorry for her; for though Polly was usually a brave girl and seldom lost her temper, to-day she was crying more for temper than for sorrow.

No, the old clock looked as kind and amiable as ever, and yet Polly did not see her friend. If she had, I am sure it would have brought back her better self at once. Polly only cried and cried, and complained about her seat-mate at school, who had done something which made Polly angry. It was only a slight thing, but Polly let it fret her; and the more she thought about it the worse she felt.

But her friend, the clock, was to be the good angel to bring her to herself. While Polly had been crying it had been growing dark, and, as she wiped her eyes and happened to look toward the window, the face of the clock became bright from the electric light

behind it, and Polly clapped her hands with delight. "Why, you dear old friend! What *am* I thinking of? Crying in this way, and you seeing me! I'm ashamed indeed," and Polly wiped her face and tried to smile. "And I know what you are going to say to me, old clock," she added. "You want me to go and make up with my seat-mate, and I mean to, at once."

And as if to say yes the clock struck one for the half hour.

"I knew you would say yes," said Polly, "and you are a friend worth having, for your face always seems to show me the brightest side of everything."

THE SQUIRRELS' HARVEST.

BY MARY E. McALLISTER.

Little Marjorie came running into the house one cold November morning, her cheeks aglow and her eyes big with wonder.

"Oh, mamma!" she cried, "what do you think? I saw a dear little squirrel out in the woods picking up beechnuts, and he ate them whole, mamma, and then ran away as fast as he could. What made him do so?"

Mamma smiled at her daughter, and said: "Marjorie, if you will take off your bonnet and cloak we will sit by the fire, and I will tell you a story about the squirrels."

So Marjorie ran to put away her wraps, and in a few minutes was cozily cuddled in mamma's lap to listen.

"Out in the woods," began mamma, "in a hollow tree, is a little house where lives a very

happy family consisting of Papa Squirrel, Mamma Squirrel, and their two children, Fly and Fleet. The door of their house is a hole in the side of the tree, and just inside they have a cozy parlor carpeted with the softest leaves, and a storehouse where they store away food for the long winter.

“All through the summer Papa and Mamma Squirrel with Fly and Fleet played merrily in the woods, running on the ground, climbing trees, jumping about on the branches and scampering very fast to their snug home at the sound of dogs or mischievous boys. At night they slept safe and warm on the soft carpet of their parlor. And so the weeks and months of summer passed quickly by and autumn came.

“One morning Papa Squirrel went out to take a run before breakfast. He found something white spread over the ground; the air was not soft and warm but raw and chilly, and it stung his toes as he ran along. So he hurried home and said to Mamma Squirrel: ‘My dear, Jack Frost has come, and we must all go to work with a will, for he has shaken

the nuts from the trees, and if we do not gather them before he brings the snow, we shall have nothing to eat during the cold winter. The ground is covered with frost already.'

"So, after they had breakfasted on a few old nuts, Papa Squirrel, Mamma Squirrel, Fly, and Fleet, started gayly out to find their winter's store of food. They did not need to carry bags, as you have to do when you go nutting, for right inside their cheeks were little pockets made on purpose to carry nuts. They all scampered to the nearest nut tree, and each squirrel worked busily until he had filled his pockets just as full as he could, and his cheeks stuck out big and round on either side; then he ran and emptied the nuts from his pockets in a pile on the ground in front of his house. Then with his sharp teeth he gnawed the hard shell from the nuts and put the clean white meats away in the little storehouse.

"So they all worked busily till the sun sank low in the west, and they were so tired that they were glad to go into their house and sleep soundly till the morning.

"Many days through the chilly autumn they worked, until at last their storehouse was filled with walnuts and beechnuts, and Papa Squirrel said: 'Now we have enough food to last through the winter and we can rest.'

"That very night Papa Squirrel waked from his sleep and heard the wind blowing, and thought to himself, 'we shall soon have snow'; and, sure enough, when he went to the door to look out in the morning the ground was covered with snow, snowflakes were flying in the air and the wind was blowing a big drift right up in front of their door.

" 'Oh!' said Mamma Squirrel, 'I'm so glad we have gathered our nuts.' 'Yes,' said Papa, 'and we are warm and comfortable. Now we can take a long nap and when we wake up hungry we shall have plenty to eat.'

"And Fly and Fleet danced about on the soft leaf carpet of their parlor, and cried: 'What a nice home we have'!"

Little Marjorie lifted two shining eyes to mamma's when the story was finished, and said: "That was such a nice story, mamma.

I did not know that the squirrels had a home. Does the good Father, who gives me my home, take care of the squirrels too?"

"Yes," said Mamma, "God cares for everything that He has made."

"And the squirrel that I saw in the woods was putting the beechnuts into his pockets to take home. Isn't it funny?" said Marjorie.

THE ROBINS' HOME.

BY EVELYN LINCOLN.

One day in the springtime, when the little flowers were waking up, Mr. Robin called to Mrs. Robin who was sitting high up in the apple tree. He said: "Come let's sing a song, and then begin to build a nest in this apple tree."

The song was full of sweet notes and dainty trills, and Mr. Robin ended with "cheer up, cheer up."

Then they flew all around the tree to find the safest place for their little home.

"No, this place will not do," sang Mrs. Robin, "for it is too low. It is cozy," turning her gray head about, "but the cats can come up here."

Another place that Mr. Robin liked was too far out on a branch, where the wind could blow their nest off on the ground. Such a

pretty place as they chose at last, not too far out on a branch

They had a beautiful time building the little home. They looked all over the fields for twigs and dried leaves. They flew to the barnyard near the apple orchard, and found ever so many long horsehairs that had come out of Tom's and Dobbin's tails. In the farmhouse yard they got some nice feathers and pieces of string, and from the woods some moss. All these things they carried, one by one, in their strong bills to the tree, working and tugging away until the nest was done.

Oh, how soft and round and cozy it was! The sticks, leaves, and string made the outside firm and strong. The horsehair, woven round and round, with the moss and feathers in it, made the inside nice and warm for Mother Bird, and for something else that came in it one day. If we could have looked in the little home that day, we should have seen three pretty little blue eggs, lying close together.

Mr. and Mrs. Robin were very happy. Mrs. Robin would not leave the nest, but sat on the eggs to keep them warm, while Mr. Robin sat

near her on the tree and sang his sweetest song. Then he spread his wings and flew away over the tree tops. When he came back he had something nice in his mouth for Mother Bird to eat. Sometimes Father Bird sat in the nest so that Mother could stretch her wings and fly away through the air.

One day when Mother Robin was on the nest, she heard a faint "peep, peep!" and looking down saw a little bird under her warm breast. Soon came another "peep, peep!" and a second little bird was out. Then she heard a gentle tap, tap against the shell of the third egg; so she tapped on the outside of it, and out came a very small bird. She cuddled them under her, nice and warm, for they were not very strong and she did not wish them to catch cold.

But in a little while they began to grow stronger, because their father and mother had taken good care of them. They began to move about and tried to hop while in the nest, but they fell over each other; so finally one day, Harry, who had come out of the shell and said "peep, peep!" first, said "peep, peep!" again very loud.

"Oh, don't," exclaimed Fluffy, the last one out. "You will fall."

You see Harry meant to tell his brother and sister that he was going to hop up on the side of the nest. Up he went, and back he fell into the nest; for he had looked down through the leaves on the tree to the ground. Oh! it seemed miles and miles away, and made him dizzy.

The next day he wanted to try again. So he and Reddy hopped up and out on the branch. Poor little sister Fluffy was frightened and screamed, "peep, peep, peep!"

The two brothers had just stretched their wings out to "try to fly like father."

"Wait a few days, little birds," Mother said. "Your wings are not strong enough yet."

They hopped back into the little home again, and father brought Fluffy a pretty red cherry to eat.

Soon after this all three hopped out, but when a big dog said "bow wow," under the tree, they went back again as fast as they could go. When Mother Bird came home that

day, she sat on the edge of the nest and told her children that they must learn to use their wings. The dog had gone into the house, the cats were not in sight, and now was a good time to try.

Father Bird sat on the other side of the nest and showed them how to raise their wings to beat against the air. Harry was out first; he raised his wings and let himself go. Down he fell on the lower branch.

"Oh! it was such fun," he called out, "to feel yourself going through the air."

Reddy and Fluffy were not in so much haste, and learned to fly sooner than Harry, who tried again, and landed on the ground beneath the apple tree.

Father and Mother Bird shrieked, "cheep, cheep," which meant, "Lift your wings and come back quickly."

They flew down to him and begged him to try; but poor little Harry was so tired that he could not stir.

"Oh dear!" said mother, "What shall we do?"

Just then a big man came into the orchard, and, hearing the birds call, he looked to see what was the trouble. He found Harry on the grass. The poor birds were more frightened than ever. But, lifting the little bird very gently, the man put him on a branch of the home tree. When he was rested he flew up to the nest again. Father, mother, Reddy, and Fluffy were so glad to have him home again that they sang and peeped. He then cuddled down in the warm nest and was soon fast asleep.

GRANDMA'S THANKSGIVING STORY.

BY ALICE LOTHERINGTON.

It was getting toward bedtime in the house on the hill, and the children had gathered about the fire, for a talk with grandma before going to bed.

"Listen," said Willie, "how the wind blows down the chimney. I think Jack Frost must be out to-night." Just then Jane came in to put coal on the fire, and told the little folks it was snowing. "Hurrah!" cried Joey, "we'll have snow for Thanksgiving. Won't that be jolly?"

"Boys," said sister Nettie, as she looked at the clock, "only twenty minutes more before bedtime; if we don't look out it will be too late for grandma's story, and you know we don't want to miss that."

"Indeed we don't," said the boys, and they drew their chairs closer, while little Bess nestled in grandma's lap.

"What shall the story be about, dears?" asked grandma.

"A Thanksgiving story, please," answered Joey, "a *really* and *truly* one."

"I'll tell you about a Thanksgiving long, long ago," said grandma, after a minute's thought. "Were there any little boys and girls in the story?" asked Bess. Grandma nodded.

"Once upon a time, many years ago, there were a number of people who lived in a country called England. These people, Puritans they were called, were not happy in their old home, so they thought that they would come over the big ocean and make another home for themselves, in the new world, which a man named Christopher Columbus had discovered a long time before. The name of the new country was America. Now these people had two ships named 'Speedwell' and 'Mayflower,' in which they were to sail across the ocean to their new home.

"Just as they were about to start, it was found that the 'Speedwell' was not fit to go so far, so all the people had to go in the Mayflower.'

“One beautiful morning in September, after bidding their friends good-by, the little band set sail in the ‘Mayflower.’

“For four long months they were upon the ocean, but at last they landed on the shore of Massachusetts, in December, 1620.

“It was bitter cold, so the men left the women and children on the ship while they went on land to build log houses for their families to live in.

“When springtime came the people planted corn; but they planted too soon, and Jack Frost came, pinched the tiny shoots just coming out of the ground, and the corn died.

“Still our friends kept cheerful and made the best of what they had, for they knew there was a big ship coming from England with more corn and good things on board.

“But the ship did not come, and the store of food got less and less.

“How the people watched for that ship! Little children would go down to the shore, shade their eyes with their hands and look far over the water, to see if the ship was coming.



The children looked out over the water to see if the ship was coming.

"One morning some one spied a white sail in the distance, which grew larger and larger, and at last came to anchor in their harbor. How happy the people were, for it was the ship which they had been looking for so long. There would be plenty to eat now.

"The Governor had the church bell rung, and all the people, big and little, gathered together and gave thanks to God for sending food to them.

"You may be sure that there were good dinners cooked that day, and all the boys and girls had as much as they could eat.

"When the next spring came, the people were careful not to plant the corn too soon, so Jack Frost could not hurt it, and in the fall they reaped a good harvest, and had plenty of corn for the next winter."

"Is that a really and truly story, grandma?" asked Bess.

"Yes, dear," answered grandma.

"Is that the reason we keep Thanksgiving to-morrow?" said Joey.

"Not exactly," replied grandma; "the President of the United States tells the people

to have a Thanksgiving on the last Thursday in November, to thank God for the harvest, and all the blessings He has given to us for the past year.

“But, little folks, the clock is going to strike nine, so give grandma a kiss and away to bed, and dream of the good time you will have to-morrow with your cousins, for you know they are coming to spend Thanksgiving with you.”

THE SONG THEY ALL SANG.

BY ANNA H. LITTELL.

Down in "the meadow where all the long day ten little frolicsome lambs are at play," lived a happy little river. It was very busy all day long, and even at nighttime it did not stop to sleep. It was so busy doing kind things and helping others, always giving of its water drops to thirsty roots of trees and flowers, that it never grew tired.

It was in this river that Speckle, Splasher, and Shiner, three happy little fishes, lived. They loved their home, for the cool, shining water drops were such nice playmates, as they came rushing down the river all ready for a race and singing all the time, "Help help! help!" They loved to sing that song, for they had learned it so well. When the fishes heard the song they tried to sing it, too.

On the bank of the river lived a family of beautiful frogs. They loved to play with the water drops, too, and sang just as happy songs. Every night all the frogs by the river had a concert. Each frog had a shining green coat, and a clean white vest. Sometimes the little frogs would jump from the bank where they were singing, and splash into the water. Then they would leap back all ready to sing another song.

Down near the bank where the frogs lived, were some families of violets, buttercups, dandelions, and cowslips. They had slept safe and warm during the winter, and when they heard the river, the frogs, and the bluebirds singing, they waked up to smile and grow.

The little lambs in the meadows were very glad to see their friends again. They loved to run and play about the meadow and lie down on the green grass.

One morning Ernest and Ruth came out to the meadow with a little boat and a water wheel. The lambs were having such a fine frolic that Ernest and Ruth ran, too. They went down to one corner of the meadow where

a little stream of water was busy hurrying its water drops to the river. It was such a little brook that Ruth could easily step across it.

It was a nice place to sail her boat. Ernest fastened his wheel, so that the water ran over it and turned it swiftly around. While they were busy, the little brook sang all the time and ran on very fast, giving a refreshing drink to all the violets and buttercups that lived near. It sang the same song that the river sang, "Help! help! help!"

"I think I know why mother says the river sings 'Help! help! help! all the time'," said Ruth. "It does help every one it meets. It helps the flowers grow. It gives the lambs, the fishes, and the frogs a drink. It carries the boats and all the people in them. It turns the wheel down at the mill over there. Listen! I think the wheel is singing the same song, 'Help! help! help!' only it sings it louder than this little brook. I'd like to learn that song too."

Ernest and Ruth went home and they did sing that song.

Ernest took his little red watering can and gave a drink to the plants on a shelf by the window, while Ruth helped her mother, who was busy in the sewing room.

Then both went to the garden and planted some seeds and pulled up every little weed they saw. Then they tried to think of something else that would help. Soon Ernest clapped his hands and jumped, saying, "Oh, I know what to do. Mother is too busy to come out to the meadow to see the flowers. We can bring them to the house to live with her. She will be glad to see them."

Ernest found a wooden box and took it with them to the meadow while Ruth carried a little trowel. They looked around to find a big family of violets. With the trowel they gently lifted the whole family and planted them carefully in the box. They carried them home and put them by the window beside the sewing machine.

When mother came in and saw them she was very glad. She knew what song Ernest and Ruth were learning to sing. She called them and said: "Did you hear what the

flowers said when you brought them here?" "Why, no, mother, they did not talk at all." "But," said Mother, "they did talk to me; they are very still when they talk. If you listen and think carefully, you will learn to hear and understand what they say."

Ernest and Ruth watched the flowers every day and kept singing their song of "Help! help! help!" One morning they found the pretty purple dresses of the violets very much faded and curled. Ruth said, "Oh, mother, the violets are almost dead, and I have not found out what they say yet. Come and look at them."

Mamma looked with her at them and picked up one little violet whose faded dress had dropped away. "See," said her mother, "what a nice, little green jacket this violet has. It is not dead. See its little eye looking at us. It is getting ready to go to sleep. It goes to bed very early. It does not need its purple dress any more. It will surely wake up in the spring next year, and have a new dress. Every time it wakes up from its long nap it has a new dress. When it wakes up, you can watch it again and listen to find out what it says."

FLOWER FAIRIES.

BY ANNA H. LITTELL.

One bright morning in May, a little eight-year-old boy was wheeling a baby cab along in the sunshine. His baby brother Roy was having a happy time in the cab. When he waked from his morning nap mamma had asked Ernest to help her by taking baby Roy riding, while little Ruth helped her at home.

After a long ride in the sunshine, Ernest pushed the cab under the shade of a large tree near the stream where his water wheel was fastened, and sat down on a large stone by the bank of the stream.

Baby Roy was fast asleep, and it was so quiet Ernest felt quite alone out under the trees all by himself. He looked at the violets and buttercups near his feet, smiling at him; then he watched the water rushing along so swiftly down the stream. He saw some shining little fishes swimming, and one jumped up

from the water and then fell back again. Then two frogs with shining green coats leaped from some hiding-place and stood looking at him with their bright little eyes. Near them he saw a big white snail moving slowly, carrying its pretty shell house along with it on its back.

The violets, the fishes, the frogs, and the snail were all so quiet! Ernest said aloud, "I wish you could all talk to me; I have so many questions I would like to ask you, and, if you could talk, we should have such good times."

Just then a bluebird on a branch above Ernest's head sang such a glad song that the little boy thought the bluebird had understood what he said, and was speaking to him. He said, "Good morning, Mr. Bluebird, is your home in this tree?" Then the bluebird flew far up in the tree, and there Ernest saw a little nest fastened to the tree. Mamma bird was there and three little birds.

Two bushy tails rushed up the tree, and Ernest saw two brown squirrels run into a hole in the tree and then turn around and look at him. "O," he said, "what a nice

little door you have to your house! I think you have a pretty good home in that tree. I wonder if your name is Bushy Tail, and if you are the squirrel that gathered nuts for the poor, lame squirrel who had no nuts. I wish you could talk to me."

Then the squirrel began to chatter, but Ernest did not understand all he said.

Baby Roy awoke, and while Ernest wheeled him through the sunshine, a little leaf flew down and Roy clapped his hands with delight. Then a bird flew down and stood still for an instant right in front of Roy, and he laughed again to see birdie come to visit him.

When they reached home mamma said "Ernest, what did you do to make Roy so happy?"

"O, mamma, it was the bird and the leaf and the sunshine that made him so glad. He thought they came just to visit him. He laughed just as if they were talking to him. Do you think they did talk to him, mamma? I wish they could talk. I've so many questions which I should like to ask them."

Mamma said, "When I was out in the garden I saw a fairy in every flower, and they talked to me. The fairies in the flowers out in the woods will speak to you, if you will look and listen." So Ernest ran out by the stream again to find the fairies.

He looked closely at every flower to find the fairy in it and thought, "I wonder what mamma meant." Then he began gathering a bouquet of flowers to take home to mamma. Then he thought, "I'll gather a big, big bouquet, and ask papa to take it with him to the city tomorrow for those little children who have no flowers, but love them so." When he took them home, mamma said, "Did you find the fairies?" "I think I did," said Ernest, "and they said our 'Garden verse' to me—

'Kind hearts are the gardens,
Kind thoughts are the roots,
Kind words are the flowers,
Kind deeds are the fruits.
Take care of your garden
And keep out the weeds;
Fill, fill it with sunshine,
Kind words and kind deeds.
Love is glad sunshine,
God sends every hour;
Shines away all darkness,
And wakens each flower.'

“Every violet and buttercup seemed to say to me, ‘Take me where I can help make some one glad.’ It made me think of so many things I might do to make the flowers grow in my kind heart garden. I thought how God sent sunshine to make flowers grow in the woods and in our heart gardens, too. If love is glad sunshine, then love wakes up all kinds of flowers and helps all good things grow.”

When papa came home, Ernest met him with a smiling face, and told him all about the fairies he had found in the flowers.

THE TULIP'S STORY

BY HOPE DARLING.

Of my early days I have only a faint remembrance. As I nestled in my bed of moist brown earth, surrounded by my brothers, sisters, and cousins, I learned that there was a beautiful upper world which I should one day see.

That day came much sooner than I expected. A pair of chubby hands dug around us, and I and a dozen other young bulbs were suddenly lifted up into the light.

Oh! what a beautiful place the world is! There was the smiling September sky bending caressingly over all things. Beautiful flowers grew near, while from the grove back of the house came the sweet song of a lark. The face that bent over me was a dimpled one with blue eyes and smiling scarlet lips.

"Why, Myra Erb, what are you doing?" and another bright faced little girl came across the lawn from the street.

"Something lovely, Irene; I'll tell you all about it, and you can help if you want to. You remember Miss Eaton telling us about that little lame girl, Maggie Clegg, don't you? Mamma said if I wanted some pretty presents for her and Grandpa Smith and cousin Willie, who is always sick, and lots of other folks, I could take up some of these tulips and hyacinth bulbs."

"Are you going to put them in those?" Irene asked, pointing to a row of tin cans which had been freshly painted.

"Yes, papa painted them for me. Isn't it nice?"

"Of course," Irene's tone was a little doubtful. "My mamma always plants bulbs, but she sends away and gets nice ones, and puts them in pretty pots."

"Yes," Myra nodded her head. "I haven't money to do that. So I will give the very best I've got. If the flowers are pretty and there is lots of love goes with them don't you think it will be better than doing nothing?"

"Indeed I do," Irene cried. "I shall be glad to help if you want me to."

I was planted carefully in a can of rich earth. Then all the cans were placed close together under an apple tree in the back yard, and straw from the stable was heaped over them.

At first I was inclined to rebel. But as I thought about Myra's earnest words I began to understand the pleasure there is in making others happy. I resolved to be content, feeling that a chance to help in this good work might come to me.

After a time the nights were frosty. We shivered even under our warm blanket of earth, and were glad when we were carried by Myra to a shelf in a dark cellar.

Here we stayed for many weeks with only an occasional watering to relieve the monotony. However I was aware that changes were going on. I knew that I had thrown out strong roots, and I was not surprised when, on being carried to the sitting room, I was found to have sent up a slender green shoot.

Very pleasant were the days that followed. Placed on a shelf in Mrs. Erb's sitting room I

basked in the sunshine. Then I enjoyed the happy home life that was lived around the open coal fire. I was so impressed with the kindly, helpful spirit of the family that I tried hard to grow and so fulfill Myra's expectations.

You may judge of my delight when I heard her tell Irene, who often came to see how we prospered, that I was budded. The next day I was to be taken to lame Maggie as an Easter gift.

I was so carefully wrapped for my ride that I did not feel the keen air. My first feeling when I reached my new home was one of disappointment; the room looked so bare and shabby. But when I saw Maggie's thin, pale face glow with delight at the sight of my rich green leaves and large bud, I forgot everything but her happiness.

I was placed on the window-sill where the sunshine could reach me. After Maggie had been told how to care for me, the two little girls sat down and Myra told the sweet story of the Eastertide. I listened reverently and

learned of a wondrous life freely given for others.

Maggie slept late on Easter morning. When she was dressed she limped across the room to my side. Oh, I was so happy! For, on the top of my tall, green stem was opened a cup-shaped flower, whose pale, yellow petals were barred and dashed with spots of vivid crimson.

THE FOOLISH PEACH BLOSSOM.

BY HELEN E. WRIGHT.

Little Peach Blossom lived in a big, brown house in the very center of a queer old orchard. There were so many of the Blossom children and they all looked so very much alike that scarcely any one but their own mother could tell them apart.

They kept her very busy, too, for there were all the dainty little pink dresses to be made every Springtime, and all the suits of red and yellow and gold to be worn in the summer days when all the little blossoms had grown out of blossomhood into great velvety peaches. Then, too, there were the little brown nightcaps to be made ready for the long Winter's nap, when the sweet dreams came.

After the blossoms had been sleeping a long, long while, there came a day when a strange thing happened. How it ever came

about I'm sure I don't know; but poor little Peach Blossom awoke a whole month before it was time, and there was the blue sky and the orchard trees just as she had left them when she went to sleep.

"Oh," cried Blossom, "it is Spring!"

"Not yet," sighed the tree. "Lie still."

"Not yet," murmured the wind, and he set all the little brown cradles rocking again.

"Sleep, sleep, sleep," chirped a cold little chicken underneath the tree.

But Blossom would not listen. Off came her nightcap and down it tumbled to earth, and soon she was dancing on a bare brown bough, all clad in the sweetest pink.

But somehow it was lonely there. She wished she had not broken the cradle, for the other blossoms were still asleep. She wished she had not dropped her nightcap, for her ears were so cold; and the great rough wind tossed her about and tore her dainty skirts. Even the cold little chicken was cuddled up beneath his mother's wing.

“I think,” said one tree to another as the shadows deepened, “I think Jack Frost will come to-night.”

When the sun rose next morning it set millions of tiny frost diamonds sparkling in its light.

“Oh, see!” cried the children. “How pretty the world looks! And our old peach tree has a whole overcoat of frost.

But they didn’t see the one foolish little blossom hanging dead upon the bough.

THE LITTLE SEED.

BY ANNIE E. POUSLAND.

Far down in Mother Earth a tiny seed was sleeping, safely wrapped in a warm, brown jacket. The little seed had been asleep for a long, long time, and now somebody thought it was time for him to wake up. This somebody was an earthworm that lived close by. He had been creeping about and found that all the seeds in the neighborhood had roused themselves, and were pushing their roots deep down into the earth, and lifting their heads up, up through the soil into the bright sunshine and fresh air.

So when the worm saw this little seed still sleeping, he cried: "Oh, you lazy fellow, wake up! All the seeds are awake and growing, and you have slept long enough."

"But how can I grow or move at all in this tight, brown jacket?" said the seed in a drowsy tone.

“Why, push it off. That’s the way the other seeds have done; just move about a little and it will come off.”

The little seed tried, but the tough jacket wouldn’t break; and all the time the worm was telling him how happy the other seeds were, now that they had lifted their heads into the sunshine.

“Oh dear, oh dear!” said the seed, “what shall I do? I can’t break this jacket, and I shall never see the beautiful sunshine! Besides I’m so sleepy I can’t keep awake any longer;” and he fell asleep again.

“The lazy fellow,” thought the earth-worm; “but it is strange that the other seeds shed their jackets so easily. Who could have helped them I wonder?”

The little seed slept soundly for a long while, but at last he awoke, and found his jacket soft and wet, instead of hard and dry, and when he moved about it gave way entirely and dropped off.

Then he felt so warm and happy that he cried, “I really believe I am going to grow after all. Who could have helped me take

off my jacket? And who woke me, I wonder?—for I don't see anyone near by."

"I woke you," said a soft voice close by. "I'm a sunbeam and I came down to wake you; and my friends the raindrops moistened your jacket, so that you might find it ready to slip off."

"Oh, thank you," said the seed, "you're all very kind. Will you help me to grow into a plant, too?"

"Yes," said the sunbeam, "I'll come as often as I can to help you, and the raindrops will come too; and then, if you work hard, with our help you will become a beautiful plant, I'm sure."

"But," said the seed, "how did you know that I was sleeping here? Could you see me?"

"No," said the sunbeam, "but my Father could. He looked down from his home in heaven, and he saw you far beneath the earth trying to grow, and he called the raindrops to him and said: 'One of my seed children is sleeping down there, and he wants to grow. Go down and help him, and tell

the sunbeams to follow you and wake the seed, so that he may begin to grow as soon as he will.' "

"How kind he is!" said the seed. "If he had not seen me sleeping here I should have always been a brown seed, I suppose. Who is your kind Father?"

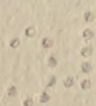
"He is your Father, too. He is everyone's Father, and takes care of everybody. Nothing could live without him."

"How can I thank him," said the seed.

"What could I do that would please him very much?"

"Grow into just the best plant that you possibly can," said the sunbeam, "that will please him most of all."

So the seed grew into a beautiful vine, that climbed higher and higher, towards the heavens, from which the Father smiled down upon him to reward his labor.



THE KING OF THE ORCHARD.

BY HELEN EDWARDS.

Of all the apple trees in Mr. Campbell's orchard, the robins preferred the Rambo on the hill behind the house. It was tall and strong, and the rise of the ground was so great that they could sit in its branches and see far over the tree tops to the turn where the river disappeared between the hills. It had more blossoms, too, and sweeter ones than the others, so the robins thought, and they made their homes there for many springs.

The tree seemed glad that the robins loved it, and every year held its head higher and put out more leaves that shaded the nests, and, if Jack Frost did not nip the flowers, bore better fruit each year.

Mr. Campbell's little grandchildren often played under the trees, and they liked the Rambo best, too, and named it "The King of

the Orchard." They used to watch for the robins' return in the spring, and the birds knew that they were friends, and built their nests and sang as if nobody was there.

"When I'm big," said Kate one day, looking at the pink and white flowers, "I'll climb up there and play I'm a fairy princess with a flower garden in the air."

"And I'll be the soldier that guards you," said Dick. "I'll fly round and round the garden on a winged horse and—"

"Yes, Dick, a pink horse," broke in Kate, "you can really be riding on a branch covered with pink and white flowers, you know."

"A pink horse," shouted Dick, "who ever heard of such a thing? My horse is going to be black like old Badger, with a white spot on his nose."

"Fairy horses could be any color," said Kate, "and I want a pink one to match the flowers."

"All right," replied Dick, "if you'll let him have green eyes to match the leaves and brown legs to match the branches."

So the children made their plans, but the

next winter the North wind came rushing down the valley with such force that it almost snapped the apple tree off at its roots, and did tip it over, so that it lay along the side of the hill, instead of standing straight up as before.

"It will have to be taken away in the spring," said Mr. Campbell; "I am sorry to lose its fine fruit."

"Oh, our poor tree!" said Kate, "it was such a beauty, and what will the robins think when they come back and find it gone? I hope they will know we did not cut it down."

Spring was a very different thing that year to the injured tree. Though it was not broken off completely, and though the sap ran out into the branches where it could, the tree felt as though it was hardly worth while to put out any blossoms down there on the ground.

Still, it tried to keep the apple tree law,—that each one shall do his part for the spring flower show. So one morning when Dick and Kate went to look at their old friend, they saw, instead of bare, dried up branches, a mass of beautiful apple blossoms.

The children clapped their hands for joy and ran to bring their grandfather to see it. "You'll let it stay, won't you, grandfather?" said Kate.

"Of course I will," answered Mr. Campbell, "brave old tree!"

Kate decided that the fairy princess would like an apple blossom garden on the ground better than up in the air—it was so remarkable. And the children had such merry times in the branches, that the tree found them even better company than the birds. The robins built near by and sang to their friends day after day; and, as the summer went on, the fairy garden, as Kate called it, turned into a fairy orchard whose apples were the best of the year.

"I think our tree is more 'King of the Orchard' than ever, grandfather," said Dick, as he came in, his hat and pockets full of fruit. And grandfather said he thought so too.

WHAT THE SUN DID.

BY C. A. L.

Back of Farmer Green's house was a large cornfield, and as soon as the frost was out of the ground in the Spring, Farmer Green came with his horse and his plow to get the field ready for planting.

It did not require very much work, after the plowing was done, to drop the seed; for Farmer Green had a good helper in his little daughter Nell.

Early in the morning, just after breakfast, she would fill her apron with corn, and he would fill the bag that was slung on his arm, and off they would go, dropping a handful of kernels, first in this little spot and then in that, in regular rows until the whole field had been planted.

Then the warm rain came and the pleasant sun shone on these little kernels until

each burst open its little coat and sent up a shoot of green.

When the corn was nicely started, the farmer scattered some pumpkin seed in between the little hills of corn, and in a very short time they had sent out little green leaves and a pumpkin vine had begun to grow.

All this time the good old sun had been warming the apple and pear and peach trees, and one morning their old brown branches were covered with beautiful blossoms.

How very proud they were of their new dresses and sweet perfumes! They could not help thinking that the corn looked very plain in its work-a-day dress of green, and they tossed their heads and looked up at the blue sky. Very soon the playful wind saw how vain the trees were, and he would come and shake a shower of pink petals down into the cornfield and then run away again, until at last their pretty blossoms were gone and only little tiny green fruits were left in their places.

Then for a long time the trees were as green as the corn and the pumpkin vines, and they forgot to think how pretty they looked, but

just kept growing day after day and enjoying the pleasant warm weather.

The corn grew so fast that on very still nights you could hear it crackle. Soon it was all in tassel, and the pumpkin vines had big yellow blossoms.

Then a funny idea came to the little green peaches and pears and apples and to the tiny little green pumpkins, too. They thought: "Now that the sun has been so kind to us all summer, kept us warm and bright, and smiled at us nearly every day, let us do something to help it." So the little green peaches smiled back at the sun, and the apples and pears did the same, and the little green pumpkins kept getting larger and larger and rounder and rounder every day. But they took no notice of what the modest grains of corn were doing under their green husks.

When Farmer Green came to his field one day, what do you suppose he saw? Each little peach was round and yellow like the sun. Each harvest apple and pear had taken on golden hues, and the pumpkins had tried so hard to outdo all the rest that they were of a

deep orange color. On a dark day when the rain fairies had hung a curtain in front of the old sun, the yellow pumpkins were almost brilliant enough to take its place,—they looked so bright and cheerful. The corn, too, had not been ungrateful, for within its green husks, Farmer Green found that the corn was yellow, too.

THE SWALLOWS' GOOD-BY.

BY JOSEPHINE JARVIS

One pleasant autumn day, Father Swallow said to his pretty mate, "My dear, it is time for us to be getting ready to go south; the nights are chilly already and some of us will take cold if we do not go where it is warmer. There is to be a meeting of swallows to-day to decide when we shall start."

Mother Swallow looked serious at this. "I know we ought to go," said she, "but I shall be sorry to leave those kind children who bring bits of bread and meat out here for us to eat. To be sure, we can find enough food for ourselves, but it is pleasant to have a little gift now and then. Do you remember, too, the time they tried to make a nest for us? They thought it just as good as if a bird had made it, but I would not have trusted myself—to say nothing of our precious eggs and

baby birds—in such a nest! Besides, I prefer a nest in the barn. But the children meant it all kindly.”

“Indeed they did,” said Father Swallow, “and I really think that they will be sorry, too, about our leaving them; but we shall see them again in the spring.”

“Yes,” said Mrs. Swallow, brightening, “and we will not forget them. But, my dear, I see that the other swallows are already gathering.”

At this, Mr. Swallow flew off as fast as he could go; and that is very fast indeed, as you know if you have ever watched a swallow fly.

When Mr. Swallow came home he told his mate that they must start southward the next week.

“I wish we could let those little children know that we are going,” said Mrs. Swallow. “I think they will find out about it,” Mr. Swallow replied. “They are out of doors so much that they will see us when we all meet together on the barn roof.”

The children did see the meeting and were very much interested. Before joining the

company, Father and Mother Swallow and their young ones darted here and there in front of the farmhouse, chirping "good by"; and the children waved their little hands and called out in answer, "Good-by! good-by! Come back again in the spring!"

THE WILLOW'S WISH.

BY KATE L. BROWN.

When the autumn came the Willow tree felt sad and uncomfortable.

It saw the maple in a gorgeous robe of red and gold, while the oak stood proudly dressed in terra cotta. Even the walnuts and chestnuts were fine in garments of sunny brown and gold.

The Willow sadly rustled its thin foliage and sighed bitterly. "What an ugly old tree I am," it said; "my trunk is clumsy and twisted, my branches have no grace. In the autumn time when every other tree is fairly flaming, my leaves are just a sickly faded green. Some, it is true, have a golden edge, but that hardly shows. I believe I'll stop growing. When I was younger I did not mind my clumsiness so much. Now that I am old I see plainly that I am indeed a poor thing."

"Oh, dear! oh, dear!" peeped the birds perched upon its branches. "Don't get blue,

dear old friend; what should we birds do without you? As long as I can remember we have rested in your branches on our way south every fall, and again in the spring as we returned north. No other tree would seem so cozy."

"Well, I thank you," said the Willow; "that certainly makes me feel better."

"Let me say one word," came from the grass below, where a late wild forget-me-not was nestling. "We flowers could not do without you. You are a strong, grand friend. You spread your branches over us, keeping away the rough winds. Your leaves drop down and cover us with a warm blanket when it is time to go to sleep. I'm sure the cows in summer would miss your shade, and the bees in spring the nectar in your blossoms. Would not the children miss you, too? Think of the hundreds of whistles that have been made from you. Are you tired of being the friend of all so many years?"

"No, no," said the tree very quickly, "I am much ashamed of myself. Please forget my grumbling."

"Good-by," said the birds; "we will come again. Good-by, dear Willow."

"Good-by," said the forget-me-not; "throw down my blanket, for I grow sleepy. Cheer up, old friend."

When the birds came back in the spring the Willow was again clothed in gold. From every twig hung its lovely catkins scattering their yellow pollen, and filling the air with fragrance.

The early bees were there, having a feast, and a whole row of children sat on the fence laughing and blowing their newly-made whistles. "Isn't the old Willow lovely?" said one little girl looking upward. "It is all gold," said another. "See the pollen float down! And the bees—they are just covered with gold, too."

"What did I tell you?" said the birds.

"Why, this is just my spring dress that I have on every year," said the Willow. "I am glad if it is lovely. I believe I did complain last fall; it was very foolish."

"You are all right," peeped the birds, "so we can leave you with easy minds. Good-by."



"Isn't the old willow lovely?" said one little girl,
looking upward.

A DEAR LITTLE FAMILY.

BY CAROLYN SHERWIN BAILEY.

Such a pretty little house as it was away up in the old apple tree. Not like our houses, oh, no!—for it had not any roof and its walls were built of—what do you suppose? Why, bits of thread and scraps of paper, long hairs and dry grasses. When the summer wind blew and rocked the branches of the tree, you might watch this wee house swinging, too.

Can you guess who lived in this tiny cottage? Mr. and Mrs. Robin Redbreast, to be sure, just home from the south, where they had been spending their winter. There was a great deal of house cleaning to be done when they first came up north for the summer. The walls had even to be all built again,—very hard work, you may be sure. But at last they were all settled and ready for visitors.

There is something in the nest now; can you guess what it is? Something that is round and blue and speckled. Yes, they are eggs; and Mrs. Redbreast is so happy that she sits and sings all day with her wings over them to keep them warm. Mr. Redbreast is glad, too, for he flies about all day, finding nice things for his mate to eat. He starts out some mornings even before the sun is up, and he picks out worms, berries, and the crumbs that kind little friends scatter for him. He gets very tired sometimes, but Mrs. Redbreast tells him to wait and see what a sweet surprise she will have for him one of these days. I think you can tell what it will be, children.

By-and-by, those blue eggs will break. Out will hop five little baby redbreasts, laughing at the funny old world they have come to. Then, how happy mamma and papa Robin will be! and what hard times they will have teaching these five babies—not to walk but to fly.

Five more mouths to feed! but they don't mind it, not a bit. And the breezes will blow the nest, with its glad family, to and fro in the sunshine all summer long.

HOW WE CUT APRICOTS.

BY EVELYN HIBBARD.

My little friend Reginald lives on a big ranch in California, where apricots and so many other good things grow.

One day last July I asked Reginald which he liked best, the city or the country.

"The country," said he, promptly.

"And why?" said I.

"Because there are so many *applecuts* in the country," answered Reginald. "I forget the other reasons."

He was very busy making what he said was a chicken coop.

That afternoon Reginald took me out to the apricot orchard.

There was a long open shed, which stood on the edge of the orchard; and under this shed were men and women and a great many boys and girls, cutting the apricots for drying.

The children, especially, seemed to find the work very pleasant, for their tongues flew as fast as their fingers and every now and then there was a merry peal of laughter. They cut the apricots in halves, and laid them carefully in large wooden trays.

Reginald and I thought that we should like to help.

So we each took a little knife and sat down at one of the tables, with a box of apricots between us. Reginald's nimble little fingers found no trouble in keeping up with me. We each cut a whole tray full, and then we went to see our apricots sulphured.

The trays of fruit were put on a tiny car, and the car was pushed along a tiny railway to a big box that had burning sulphur in it. Then the trays of apricots were placed in the box, and left there for a few moments shut up tight with the burning sulphur.

"They do that to make the *applecuts* look nice and white when they're dried," Reginald explained to me.

By and by the tiny car carried our trays of apricots over another railway and they were

placed on the ground, in a great field which was already yellow with the drying fruit. There they were to be left in the bright sunshine for days and days. There is no fear of a sudden shower, for it does not rain all summer long in California.

After we had seen our apricots safe in the drying field, we went and sat down under a specially fine tree that Reginald knew about. We ate all the apricots that we wanted, and then we strolled back to the house through the orchard.

As we walked underneath the fine old trees with their glossy, green leaves and ripe yellow fruit, I said to Reginald: "I quite agree with you, dear, that it is nice to live in the country, where there are so many apricots."

ETHEL'S FRIENDS.

BY JANE L. HOXIE.

Ethel was a little girl who lived in the great city of New York, but she loved the country very much and often wished that she could play in the big, green fields or pick wild flowers in the woods. She remembered one summer, when she was a very little girl, staying in the country for ever so many days, almost a whole month, and having such a happy time lying on the soft grass, listening to the birds, and watching the cows and horses, the sheep, the cunning little lambs, and the old white hen with her brood of downy chicks. Oh, how she did wish she could see them all again! But the country was far, far away, and Ethel's papa and mamma were so busy that they could not take their little daughter there.

But there was a place in the big city called Central Park that seemed to Ethel like the country. She loved to go there, and had happy times as she watched the sparrows scratching

for seeds and looking about for crumbs, and as she tried to get the gray squirrels to come nearer and take nuts from her hand. And some days, oh, happiest time of all! lying with her rosy face buried in the short, green grass, and pressing closer and closer to the "great brown house," the home of the flowers.

One sunshiny day in June she had been playing in the park for a long time. Though she had coaxed and coaxed the squirrels, they would not come near; and though she listened for a long time to the hoarse croak of a frog, and watched and waited, looking about with big, bright eyes, she could not get even a peep at him. At last she grew very tired and sat down upon a bench near by to rest before going home. But scarcely was she seated when she heard some one call her name. "Ethel! Ethel!" a little voice said. She looked all about, but could see no one. "Ethel! Ethel!" it called, this time very near. She looked around, saying, "Here I am; who is calling?" "It is I. Don't you see me? I am close beside you."

Looking down Ethel saw at her feet a tiny

creature all dressed in dainty green. "Oh!" thought Ethel, "it must really and truly be a fairy. Why, I thought fairies were only make-believe people!" and she was so surprised that she forgot to answer the little creature.

Soon the fairy said: "Ethel, because you love the birds and the flowers and the trees and all the animals, I have come to take you out into the country to visit your friends."

Ethel clapped her hands and said: "Oh, I should love to go to the country! but I haven't any friends there."

"Yes, you have," said the fairy, "come and see."

So away they went, and Ethel all the time wondered whom the fairy could possibly mean by her friends; but they went so fast that, before she had time to do much thinking, Ethel found herself in a great, green meadow, bright and fresh and cool. Soon they came to a tree with spreading branches, and there, lying under it and resting in its shade, was a gentle looking creature with soft eyes, long, smooth horns, and a hairy dress of red and white.

"Here," said the fairy, "is one of your

friends, and a very good friend she is to you, too." "Oh," said Ethel, "now I know whom you mean by my friends!"

I wonder who can tell me why the fairy called the cow Ethel's friend. Yes, because without this friend Ethel would miss her cup of milk at breakfast and the golden butter for her bread.

Ethel looked into the cow's great dark eyes and, giving the white star on the cow's forehead a gentle pat, said, "Surely, you are my friend, Bossy." But the fairy said, "There are many more friends, so come on, little girl." So Ethel visited all the friendly animals,—the sheep with their woolly coats, the pigs in their sty, the chickens, ducks, and geese in the barnyard, the doves in their home on the roof, the great clever collie in his kennel; and she found that she owed something to every one of them.

Just as she was giving Rover a farewell pat, old Dobbin, harnessed to the farm wagon, came clattering up to the barn. "There is the best friend of all!" cried Ethel. "What should we do without Dobbin to carry the milk and butter and eggs to the city, and to bring back the flour and meal and sugar, to

draw the wood and coal that keep us warm, to help the farmer plow and harrow in the springtime, to draw in the hay and grain and the potatoes and apples and pears in the autumn, and to trot cheerfully along the dusty country road when the children take their rides? Oh! I know the farmer gives him a good, dry bed to sleep upon, a fresh manger of hay and a good measure of oats when he is hungry. I am sure he combs and smooths his black coat well, and puts a blanket on his back when the weather is too cold. He wouldn't cut off his black, shiny tail for the world, for how could Dobbin drive away the flies that trouble him, without his tail? I know he has plenty of fresh water to drink, and sometimes the children give him a lump of sugar. The farmer never lets Dobbin lose a shoe, because his feet might get hurt, but always takes him to the blacksmith if only a nail is loose."

* * * * *

Buzz-z z-zz! buzz-z z-z-z! sounded close to Ethel's ear. She opened her eyes and looked about. There she sat upon a bench in the

park. The sun had gone down behind the hills, and it was almost dark. The pretty little elf in green had vanished. Her country friends were nowhere to be seen. Mr. Bee's gauzy wings and yellow legs were disappearing in the distance. "There goes another of my friends," said Ethel. "I think he must have come to tell me that it is time to go home."

So Ethel ran home and told her mamma all about the fairy and her friends. And, "Oh, mamma! do you suppose the fairy really and truly took me to the country?" said Ethel.

"No," said mamma, "I think my little girl was asleep and dreaming; but, for all that, the animals on the farm are really among our very best friends."

"Yes, I know that," said Ethel, "how I wish I could really see them!" And for many days after she never went to the park without thinking of the wonderful fairy in green, and how he took her to visit her friends in the country.

A LEGEND OF THE DANDELION.

BY ELLEN ROBENA FIELD.

Once upon a time, in a tiny green camp by the roadside, lived a soldier all alone. He had traveled a long way from a dark, underground country, and meant to see something of the world. The first thing that he saw was a broad field, full of waving banners, and he thought, "What a beautiful place I have discovered," then he pitched his tent among the green grasses.

Soon the raindrop elves saw how tired and dusty he was from his journey, and they soothed him with their musical stories, and gave him a refreshing shower bath. Through the clouds came the sunbeam fairies, bringing him a beautiful uniform of green and gold, and a quiver of golden arrows. Then the soldier was very happy, and smiled out at passers-by, and cheered many a weary traveler

with a glimpse of his sunny face. By and by, spring went away over the hilltops, the birds had finished their nesting, and the butterflies came to herald summer.

Then the soldier began to feel tired, and knew that he was growing old. His gay uniform had faded, and the golden arrows had turned to silver, and the wind brownies shot them far away. So the soldier crept down among the grasses, and his green camp was left vacant. But everywhere his silvery arrows fell, there blossomed bright golden flowers, and the little children loved them, and called them dandelions.

THE POLITE THRUSH.

BY HELEN EDWARDS

"Look! look! Aunt Helen," said Elizabeth one morning last spring, "there is something white hopping on the lawn."

Aunt Helen looked and thought it was a rabbit; but when they had walked very quietly to the south end of the piazza they saw it was a dishcloth tipped up at one corner, and seeming to move of itself. Elizabeth was so surprised that she gave a little shout, and a brown bird flew from under the cloth and sat on a tree near by.

"That must be a thrush," said Aunt Helen; "they like to begin weaving their nests with something white. I suppose he took a corner of the cloth in his bill, and the wind blew it all over him; it is too large to fly away with."

"But if it was smaller?" asked Elizabeth.

"Then he could use it," said Aunt Helen. "Suppose I cut it into strips for him, and then you and I can sit under the pine tree, while I darn your stockings, and perhaps we shall see him at work."

Elizabeth was delighted, and ran to get her aunt's workbasket; and they were soon seated where they could see what became of the strips of cloth, without disturbing the bird. Before long he came hopping over the grass, pecked carefully at one of the strips, took it in his beak and flew away with it.

"I should like to see him weave his nest," said Elizabeth. "What is weaving, Aunt Helen?"

"I am weaving now," said Aunt Helen. "You remember how your heel came right through your stocking; what have I done to the hole?"

Elizabeth looked. "You've put ever so many threads from up to down across the hole," she said, "and now you are putting ever so many from right to left, but first you put a thread over one and under one all across; and the next time it goes under first

and over second; so the darn is as strong as the stocking. I want to see some more weaving."

"Hold up your pinafore," said Aunt Helen; "isn't that like the darn?"

"Yes, only the threads are smaller," answered Elizabeth, "and your basket is woven too, only that is made with little straws,"

"They make a strong basket all together," said Aunt Helen. "Birds use straw for their nest, too, and hair and moss;—but I wonder that our thrush does not come back for another piece of cloth."

"It wouldn't be polite to take it all," said Elizabeth; "he left some for the others."

The cloth disappeared, piece by piece, in the next few days, and Elizabeth was sure that "the polite thrush" told his friends about it, and that each one only took his share.

However that may be, Elizabeth's aunt found a thrush's nest long afterwards, when the wind had called all the leaves off the trees and the birds had gone south for the winter. It had string and hay and earth in it, and just one strip of white cloth.

“I think you were right about the ‘polite thrush,’ Elizabeth,” Aunt Helen said when she showed it to her. “I am glad that one little girl knew what the thrushes would do, and cared to help them.”

THE WATER-DROPS.

BY HELEN PEARSON.

One bright summer day, Father Sun, who was very busy, called his children, the sunbeams, to him and said, "To-day, my little helpers, I need you to do some work for me. Go down to the big, round earth, far below, and bring back to the sky country all the water dust that you can carry."

The little sunbeams started, and, although it was a long, long journey, they were so bright and merry that it seemed like play to them.

By and by, they drew nearer to Mother Earth, and before long saw myriads of tiny drops of water, some taking hold of hands and forming part of the great ocean, others rushing along in a strong, deep river, while some were dancing and tumbling in a merry brook, singing sweet little songs. There, too, were tiny pools of water where the drops clustered to-

gether, and yes! one bright sunbeam spied many tiny drops clinging to the grass blades and flowers.

The next thing to be considered was how the sunbeam should induce the water-drops to come up into sky country. Surely, neither the ocean nor the river nor even the little laughing brooks could be carried up on them.

But the little workers were not one bit discouraged, and they began at once to shake the water-drops apart. The little particles of water no sooner felt the little sunbeams shaking them hard than they said to each other, "Come, now for a long ride."

And sure enough, up, up, up they sailed in the boats of air, helped on by the sunbeams. But as they rose higher in the air, suddenly they began to shiver, for just then the North Wind came rushing along.

How the poor chilly vapor mass shook, and then suddenly began once more to form into drops. And some children, far down on the earth below, looked up at the sky and exclaimed, "See the dark clouds up there!" while their mammas said, "It is going to rain soon."

In a few minutes the little drops felt as if they were being pulled back to earth, and, starting from the cloud which was holding them, they said to one another, "Now for a race!" And soon, patter, patter, patter, came the sound of the rain, and the little drops once more were back in their earth home.

DOROTHY'S CHRISTMAS EVE.

BY BERTHA TOWNSEND COLER.

Dorothy stood at the window watching the raindrops splash into the puddles of muddy water in the street, and the dripping umbrellas of the few belated shoppers who were hurrying home with their arms full of packages; for it was Christmas eve, and instead of the merry jingle of sleigh bells with its suggestion of Santa Claus, instead of the soft whiteness of Christmas snow on tree and fence and road, there was the sharp patter of raindrops on the window.

Now Dorothy was the most sensible, sunshiny little girl you can imagine, and of course she wouldn't complain about the weather; but the little face in its frame of sunny curls looked pretty sober as she turned away and curled herself up in her papa's big, cushioned armchair.

The firelight flickered and danced cheerfully over the walls, the armchair was comfortable, and the patter of the raindrops had a soothing effect. All at once it seemed to grow lighter at the window, every separate raindrop had turned to a flake of snow; and what great flakes they were, and how fast they came down, rolling and tumbling over each other in their eagerness to cover the ground for a white Christmas for Dorothy.

She sat up and laughed aloud. Wasn't she glad though! and if she *should* get a new sled!

There came a faint tap on the pane. "It's only a snowflake," Dorothy thought. But it came again, and this time it was harder; and a shrill little voice said, "Well, I should think you might let me in, after I've gone to all this trouble to give you a ride on your new sled."

Dorothy was puzzled. She rubbed her eyes to be sure that there could be no mistake, and then looked again. There on the window sill stood the *dearest* little creature!

She was dressed all in sparkling white from her head to her feet, her wings were of finest gauze, and she had a tiny diamond star on her

forehead. She carried a wand also tipped with a diamond star, and she was powdered all over with a fine diamond dust that sparkled and shone in the firelight.

Dorothy had opened the window, and the little creature stepped inside and seated herself comfortably on the arm of Dorothy's cushioned chair.

She laid down her wand and, folding her arms, nodded brightly at Dorothy. "I'm the queen of the snow fairies," the newcomer said, "and you looked so comfortable in here that I thought I'd just run in and have a little chat."

"I'm very glad to see you," said Dorothy, politely. "Won't you lay off your things?"

The snow fairy laughed merrily. "I guess I'll *have* to if I stay in here very long," she replied.

"But where do you think I've been? All over this town, peeping into the different houses where there were little folks; for we snow fairies love little folks."

"Oh, *do* you?" said Dorothy, and moved a little nearer.

"But what *do* you think I saw?" the snow fairy persisted.

Dorothy shook her head.

"Well, I saw some little children that didn't have a thing for their supper but dry bread; and one little tot was dragging around an old tin can with a string tied to it for a horse. That's the only thing in the world she had to play with. And one little boy—his name was Teddy Day. Do you know Teddy?" she demanded suddenly.

Dorothy brightened visibly. "Oh, yes," she replied, "his mother washes for us."

"Well," continued the snow fairy, "I heard him tell his mother he was glad it was snowing, for he had a board that would slide down hill beautifully."

Dorothy drew a long breath. "Oh, there's my old sled, I'll take it to him the first thing in the morning! And there are my blocks and dolls and books! I'm so glad you told me; *I* didn't know little children *ever* had to play with old tin cans."

"We snow fairies know that the greatest happiness comes from *giving* happiness to others," said the fairy, and as she spoke she disappeared, and a drop of water rolled

on to Dorothy's hand from where she had stood.

Dorothy awoke with a start, to find her mother bending over her.

"Oh, mamma," she cried, "may I give my old sled to Teddy, and my blocks and dolls to the baby with the tin can, and my old books?" Dorothy stopped short at sight of her mother's puzzled face. "Oh, I forgot, you didn't see the little snow queen."

So, while mamma helped her prepare for bed, Dorothy told of her visit from the queen of the snow fairies.

When the happy Christmas day was almost done, and Dorothy sat with her mamma in the firelit room, talking of the merry Christmas which her old toys had made for Ted and the baby, she said, "Mamma, it's been the very loveliest Christmas I ever had, if it *wasn't* a white one."

And mamma said that Dorothy would find all through life, that the greatest happiness comes not from *getting* but *giving*.

And Dorothy said, "Why, mamma, that's just what the snow fairy said."

ELON : A STORY OF THE FIRST CHRISTMAS.

BY LUCIE KARNES.

Elon was a little boy who lived when the world first heard the joyous Christmas tidings. His father was a poor Syrian shepherd who tended his flocks on the hills outside of Bethlehem.

Elon, for so young a child, worked hard and had little pleasure, yet he was not unhappy. Every morning he went off to the meadows to guard the sheep, in whose midst he never missed the companionship of other children. Many a gay frolic he had across the hills with the playful lambs, and many a quiet talk to the gentle sheep, when he told them his childish troubles—for children have their own little trials—and he never failed to see in the mild creatures' eyes the sympathy they could not speak. Elon's heart was full

of love for his dumb friends, and there was nothing he would not do for their sake.

One night, a lamb—the youngest of the flock and Elon's pet—was missing from the fold. It was growing late, and the little boy was tired and sleepy, but he took up his staff and went bravely off in search of the lost lambkin. It was a long and weary hunt, but finally he found the little wanderer out on a lonely road that led towards Bethlehem.

Elon was unable to walk home again without resting. So he took the lamb in his arms and sat down on a big boulder that lay by the roadside.

It was a dark and lonesome spot where Elon sat, but above him the sky was glittering with the evening stars, and while they were shining Elon had no thought of fear.

Often, while tending his father's flocks at night, he had studied the starry heavens. He had traced the constellations and watched the big planets come and go, as the hours advanced, until he felt that he knew all the stars which shone above his native hills. But to-night he saw a strange one in their midst,

a great star in whose brilliant light the largest of its companions looked dim.

So absorbed was Elon in gazing at the new star, that he did not see three men riding rapidly down the road. It was not until they had stopped close to where he sat that he became aware of their presence. Elon's brave little heart beat with alarm. He clasped his arms tightly about the lambkin and would have fled from those three strange men who had appeared before him so suddenly.

But the strangers called to him in earnest, kindly tones, "We will not harm you, little one, we wish but to ask you a question. Where shall we find the child who is born king of the Jews? We have seen his star in the East and have come to adore him and to lay our gifts at his feet."

But Elon could not answer their question. His little world was the sheep pastures, and he knew of nothing that occurred beyond them.

Without another word to the wondering child, the three strangers turned around and rode quickly away.

Elon watched them as they rode down the

pathway that led toward Bethlehem, and when he could no longer see them he started on his way home. He trudged patiently along with his lamb asleep in his arms. He did not notice that the hills were dark and lonesome, or that the steep roads were hard to climb; he thought only of the wonderful star and the words which the three strangers had spoken to him. He wished that he, too, could find the child whom the three travelers had come so far to seek.

In after years, when Elon had grown to manhood, his wish was gratified. He knew and had reason to love that holy child whom the three men from the East had come to adore, and whose beautiful star Elon had seen shining above the hills of Bethlehem on the first Christmas night.

THE FIRST SNOW STORM.

BY CORA E. HARRIS

Far away in the sunrise country some little water drops decided to take a long journey in a cloud boat. So they donned their vapor dresses while the sunshine painted them a pink sail and ever so many gentle breezes came to help them on their way.

With so many helpers, they had only to sit still and enjoy the beautiful world scenery below. How strange it seemed to look right down upon the roofs of houses and tops of trees and to ride right over the very church steeples! The boys and girls looked like wee dolls running to kindergarten, and the men and women like little boys and girls hard at work.

So many things seemed to be leaving their summer homes. What did it all mean! The cornstalks stood huddled together in large



"The little vapor friends in the cloud boat."

shocks, waiting to get a ride into some big barn. Great families of yellow pumpkins jogged slowly along in the farm wagons, each holding up a green stem-arm as if saying, "Please help me out when we get there!"

Acorns, chestnuts, beechnuts, and all kinds of nuts were being hurried along to holes in hollow logs and trees.

Maybe some one can guess what were the rapid little trains that were carrying them away from their summer tree-homes!

The caterpillars seemed in a great hurry, but hardly knew where to go. They would run along very fast, then lift up their heads as though they felt lost, turn square around and go back again.

The pine trees still kept their green dresses, while the maples stood almost bare, their "red and yellow and faded brown" leaves covering the grasses below.

The little vapor friends in the cloud boat were feeling very sorry for the maples, when a southern breeze hurried past and called out, "A message from the Robin family to all the maple trees: 'Dear maples, we are having a

happy time in the South-land, plenty of sunshine to keep us warm, and nice rice to eat; but we have not forgotten you at all, and we remember just how tenderly you rocked our baby birds in your long arms all the summer, and are now rocking to sleep your hundreds of baby leaf-buds. Take good care of them, and some morning when they all wake up with their new green dresses on you'll find us back to live with you again.' "

"That's jolly news! Guess we needn't feel sorry for them after all," said the vapor friends.

Just then the North Wind came rushing along. "Oh, how cold it is!" they all exclaimed; and in a twinkling the cloud boat was gone and the vapor friends were changed into beautiful snow crystals and went floating softly, softly down to the earth.

The children shouted to see them coming and hurried to get out their sleds. One snowflake fell right into a pansy's cold blue face. Then others came, until the pansy was all covered up, and was snug and warm for the winter. Then the little snow-crystals nestled

close together and talked of all their wonderful journey, and of their joy in making the children and the flowers happy. I wonder whether they knew that, by and by, they would again be little water drops?

NANNIE'S COAT.

BY EMMA S. LAW

PART I.

Children, would you like to know how the kindergarten balls got their jackets?

Well, I will tell you of a little boy who went to see them made and he found it so interesting that he wanted me to tell you all about it.

Johnny was a little boy who lived in the country, and his papa kept many sheep. One day his papa came home and said: "Johnny, come out into the barn and see what I found down in the lot where we keep the sheep."

Johnny left the little red and yellow and blue balls which he had been playing with and ran to the barn to see what it could be. He opened the door very carefully, and there in one corner, close by its mamma, was the dearest little lamb with such a pretty, soft,

white coat. Johnny was delighted, and asked his papa if he could have it for his own. His papa said that he might, and Johnny was so happy that he wanted to stay with it all the time. But his papa said: "No, that would not do, for the little lamb must go back to the field with its mamma and grow large and strong like the other sheep."

Johnny went nearly every day to see Nannie, as he called the little lamb, and was surprised to see how fast she grew. The little white coat grew so thick and woolly that when Jack Frost came in the fall Nannie had a nice warm blanket to wear.

One day the next spring, when the trees were all dressed in their beautiful leaves and the meadows were green with grass and dotted with yellow dandelions, Johnny said: "Papa, the weather has grown so warm that I cannot wear my overcoat any longer, and some days I cannot even wear my jacket. I should think that Nannie would be very warm with all that wool on her back."

"Yes," said Papa, "it is time to take it off."

So the next day papa took her into the barn and laid her on a table that looked much like our kindergarten table.

Now Nannie did not know what was to be done with her, and she tried to get down; but papa held her very firmly and carefully with his left arm, while in his right hand he held a great pair of shears. Do you think they were like mamma's shears? No, they were very large and queer, with short, broad blades, and were always open except when papa squeezed them, and then they would cut.

Clip! clip! went the big shears, so fast that soon Nannie's coat was all cut off and she was allowed to jump down from the table and run back to the meadow where her mamma was. How she did run and caper in the warm sunshine! She felt so cool and nice!

"Papa," said Johnnie, "where shall we keep Nannie's coat so that she can have it when Jack Frost and Old Winter come again?"

"O," said his papa, "Nannie will have a new coat then. The wool will grow and grow all summer, just as your hair does, and

by the time she needs it her coat will be nice and warm. And this fleece must go to the mill to be made into yarn and cloth so that my little man can have a new coat and some warm stockings to wear next winter."

Johnnie thought it very wonderful that next winter he would be wearing Nannie's coat. He wished that he might go to the woolen mill and see how it was made into yarn and cloth. So Johnny's papa said that he would take him to the mill and let him see how many things must be done to the fleece before it could be made into a coat.

The next morning Johnny was up bright and early, and when he came downstairs he found that mamma had breakfast all ready and that the horse and light wagon were at the door. So, as soon as they had eaten their breakfast and kissed mamma good-by, they started with Nannie's coat for the woolen mill.

PART II.

It was a beautiful morning when Johnny and his papa went to the woolen mill, and they found every one so busy there that

Johnny thought he would not bother them by asking many questions; so he kept his eyes wide open to see all he could, and listened to all that his papa said.

When Nannie's wool was carried to the foreman of the mill, he said that it was a very fine fleece, and told Johnny that he might go through the mill and see what was to become of it.

First they went into a room where some women were washing wool in large tubs; and although some of the wool was very dirty when put into the tub, it soon became pure and white. Then it was laid out on cloths in the sunshine to dry. After that it was picked to pieces until it was as light and fluffy as a great white snow bank. Johnny felt like jumping right into the middle of it, as he did into the snowdrifts in the winter; but, of course, he knew that that would not do.

Then the wool was carried into a room where some women sat with queer things in their hands which Johnny thought looked like wire hair brushes, only they were longer and had handles on the sides. These women

would take a little of the wool on one of these brushes and then brush it back and forth from one brush to the other until it was very soft and then brush it off in such a way that it was made into a little roll about as long as Johnny's arm and no larger around than his thumb. These little rolls were laid side by side very straight and others laid on top until there was quite a pile of them. Then a boy carried them into the next room, where there were a great many large wheels, which Johnny's papa said were spinning wheels; and by the side of each wheel was a high post, and on this post there was a little wheel. Then around this big wheel and reaching over and around the little wheel was a band of leather.

These wheels, with the band of leather, reminded Johnny of his mamma's sewing machine, only they were very much larger. A woman was standing by each of these wheels. One of them beckoned to Johnny to come nearer, and then she showed him how the little wheel went very fast when she took hold of the big wheel and gave it a whirl.

Then the woman picked up one of the little rolls of wool and touched something which Johnny had not noticed before. It was a little rod of iron or steel about as large as a slate pencil, and it seemed to be connected in some way with the little wheel, for when the wheels turned round this little rod turned even faster than the little wheel. This rod was called the spindle and it, too, made Johnny think of his mamma's machine—the part where she puts the bobbin when she winds thread.

And what do you think? When the woman turned the big wheel and touched the spindle with the roll of wool, she pulled the wool out into a long thread, and the spindle, turning around so fast, twisted it and made it so strong that Johnny could not break it. Then as she walked back toward the spindle and turned the big wheel back in the opposite direction, the thread was wound on the spindle and another bit of wool was twisted into a long thread or yarn, and so on until all the little white rolls were spun into one long thread.

Next it was reeled off, that is, unwound from the spindle on to something called a reel. Johnny thought it was a small wind-mill with its arms extended to hold the yarn instead of to catch the wind.

When taken from the reel it was in a skein, just like the pretty white yarn that mamma bought at the store to make baby sister's mittens of. But this woolen thread was to be used for another purpose. It was not to be left white, but was taken to the dye shop, where part of it was colored red, part blue, part yellow, and some was colored orange, some green, and some violet.

Then papa led Johnny into a room where some girls sat around baskets of rubber balls. Here, too, he saw such beautiful skeins of wool, just the colors of his dear little kindergarten balls—red, yellow, blue, green, orange, and violet, so that the room looked almost as though it was full of rainbows. Johnny wondered what these girls were doing, and as he watched them he saw that each of them had a crochet hook and that they were making jackets for the little balls. Johnny

was so delighted that he would have liked to stay a long time, but his papa said they had spent such a long time in the mill already that they had better just step into the weaving room for a few minutes and then hurry home.

So they went to the weaving room, and there they found lovely soft woolen threads which had been colored a pretty, dark blue, from which men were weaving beautiful cloth to be made into jackets and cloaks for little boys and girls. "Now," said papa, "we must go, and perhaps some day we may come again."

Johnny then thanked the man for letting him go through the mill, where he had seen so many wonderful things, and the man asked Johnny to come again, "For," said he, "you have been very quiet, and have not touched anything or bothered any of the people who are working; so I can trust you to come again." As soon as Johnny got home and had told his mamma all that he had seen, he ran out to the meadow to tell Nannie, and to thank her for the lovely wool which she had

given him. And then he gave her a nice lump of sugar, which she ate, nodding her head, meanwhile, as if to thank him for it. Then he happened to think of a little sleigh bell that Santa Claus brought him on Christmas, so he ran to the house and asked mamma if she would not fasten it to a bright red ribbon to tie around Nannie's neck, so that he should always know where to find her. This mamma did, and when Johnny tied it around Nannie's neck she seemed very proud and would shake her head as if she liked to hear the tinkle of the little bell.

HOW THE WIND FIXED MATTERS.

BY ANNE MAXWELL MILLER.

Of all the woods that the Wind knew there was one that he loved most of all, because it was so beautiful and so quiet, far, far away from all houses and noises of men, and because such happy little creatures had their homes there.

One day he came blowing into this wood, but had not gone very far when he stopped short, for his breath was quite taken away with astonishment at something he saw. There on the root of a large elm tree sat a little brown Squirrel chattering away to a Robin that perched on a twig close by, while up on the tree trunk, near his own hole, was a Woodpecker, standing all upside down, as the most sensible Woodpeckers will do and never grow dizzy, though how they manage it is more than we can tell.

The wind was not surprised to see these three talking together, for he knew that they were near neighbors and very good friends, and all lived in the same big elm tree; but he had never before seen them all look as they did on that day. Instead of twitching about and chirping merrily, the Robin sat very still and stiff on his twig, with his head drawn in and his beak stuck upwards, very much as if he was pouting; the bright eyes of the Woodpecker were half shut, and his feathers all fluffed up in a very dissatisfied way; and even the Squirrel's bushy tail had not such a cheerful flourish as usual.

"Why, highty-tighty!" said the Wind. "What does all this mean, I should like to know? What has happened to give you all doleful faces on this beautiful morning, when every one should be full of happiness?"

"It is all very well for *you* to say that," said the Robin, "you who have no housekeeping troubles and cares; but for my part, I am quite out of patience with plastering, and plastering mud, and weaving in hay and sticks. I can't see why I cannot have a comfortable home all ready

for me, like the Squirrel in the tree trunk, without the trouble of building a nest every year."

"Yes," remarked the Woodpecker, "and how I should enjoy a change from my tiresome, dark hole."

"You might both of you have reason to complain," said the Squirrel, "if you had always lived, as I have done, in the same big hole near the ground, instead of being up in the tree trunk or among the beautiful, green branches. Why wasn't I made so that I could build a beautiful hay nest?"

They all looked very unhappy indeed.

Now, you know, the dear old Wind has an excellent way of clearing things up. He whistled softly to himself, as if thinking very hard, and then he said, "Hurrah! I have a plan! I'll tell you what to do! Since your homes are already built, and each likes the others' best, why not change about and each try a new kind?"

"What a beautiful plan!" said they all; and immediately the Robin flew down to the Woodpecker's hole, and the Squirrel scampered up the tree and along the branches to

the Robin's nest, while the Woodpecker hurried into the Squirrel's hole. To be sure, the Robin found the Woodpecker's hole very close quarters indeed, and his smooth wings were all rumped, and his beautiful brown tail feathers all pushed to one side; and the Squirrel had hard work to curl himself up into the Robin's nest; and the Woodpecker felt very lonely in the Squirrel's big hole, and found the nuts stored away there a very hard bed to rest upon; but they all tucked themselves away as best they could, and tried to think that they were enjoying it very much indeed. It was such a change.

And then something happened. The sly old Wind took a long breath and blew and blew, until the great elm tree swayed and shook like a twig.

Scarcely had he stopped, when out and down and up came the three little creatures as fast as wings and feet could carry them.

"Gracious!" said the Woodpecker, "such a big barn of a place I never saw. I was all blown about in it. For safety and coziness, give me my own little hole."

"You are very welcome to it, I am sure," said the Robin. "My beak was almost blown away because I could not get my head far enough into the horrid little place. There is nothing like my own comfortable nest!"

"Comfortable indeed!" said the Squirrel. "Why, it blew about so that I nearly fell out and was obliged to hold on for dear life. Just wait until I can get back into my own snug, steady hole!"

The old Wind laughed softly to himself. "I do not think that I shall find them discontented again," said he.

THE LITTLE COTTON PLANT.

HOW IT BECAME A SHEET OF PINK PAPER.

BY NONA H. McADOO.

Once upon a time, there was a little cotton plant which lived in a great field in the far South. There were a great many other cotton plants both large and small growing in this same field, but I am going to tell you about this one, and how it became a sheet of pink paper for a sweet little girl named Dot.

The skies were very blue and the winds very gentle over the field where the little cotton plant lived; and it grew and grew until one day a cotton-picker came along and pulled off the beautiful white bolls and hurried them away in his basket. The little bolls lay very still in the bottom of the basket, and by and by they found themselves in a great big factory, where they were put through machines and made into yards and yards of lovely blue

cloth, which, after a time, was put for sale on the shelf of a shop. Then the mamma of a little girl named Dot, bought this blue cloth and made it into a beautiful new dress for her. And little Dot wore it and wore it until it was worn out and thrown into the rag-bag. Little Dot thought no more about it until one day a man whom I suspect you all know came through the streets calling: "Rags! rags! rags!" and little Dot ran and gave him what was left of her blue dress. And what do you suppose became of it? The old rag-man took it down to a paper mill, where it was torn into tiny pieces and ground into a soft pulp and then made into little pink sheets and envelopes—*beautiful* pink like a seashell!—and by and by Dot's papa bought it all tied up in a nice little box, and gave it to Dot for a Christmas present. But she didn't know it was made from her old blue dress, which had first come from the dear little cotton plant!

ABOUT A COLT.

(A True Story.)

BY EVELYN HIBBARD.

I have some friends who live on a big ranch in California.

There is a fine young horse on the ranch, that has been a pet ever since he was born. When he was a young thing with long legs, he used to come to the door of the kitchen and drink milk from a pan, like a kitten; and he would follow the children about everywhere. He was a rather rough playfellow; and finally he grew so large and strong, that his master said he must be shut up in the paddock.

The children felt sorry to lose their companion and playfellow, but they could still go to visit him.

One day the gate was left open, and before long the colt was running about in the gar-

den, trying to find his little friends. At last he saw one of the children standing at the drawing-room window. The colt gave a joyful whinny, and up the veranda steps he went and into the open door of the drawing-room. The child gave him a warm welcome and he made himself quite at home. By and by he saw something on the back of a chair that he thought might be good to eat, and he snatched it up. It was a tidy!

Just then the children's mother came in, and how she laughed when she saw the colt in the drawing-room trying to eat the tidy! She took it away from him, not because she cared about the tidy, for she thought it very ugly; but because she also thought it was not a good thing for a colt to eat. And then she made him understand very plainly that he must go out of the drawing-room.

One day the gate of the paddock was left open again, and of course out the colt came. As he had enjoyed himself so much in the house before, he thought he would try it again. This time he went into the dining room.

Now it happened that all the china in the

house was spread out there, while the china closets were being cleaned.

What a chase that colt led them before they could get him out! It seemed as though everything would be broken into pieces; but it was very funny to every one except the mistress of the house. Strange to say not a piece of the beautiful china was broken.

But that was the last time that the colt ever came into the house.

“ALL’S GONE.”

BY ANNIE E. POUSLAND.

Edna was a dear little girl, only four years old. In the early summer she went to her grandmother’s in the country to make a visit, and such a good time as she had!

All day long she could run about in the cool green grass and pick the pretty flowers. Then there were the birds, who had their nests all about, some high up among the eaves, some among the branches of the trees, some on the ground in the meadow; and two birdies had built their nests down among some bushes, where Edna could see into it very plainly.

This was the nest which Edna loved best to watch, for when she first came to grandma’s she had found the tiny eggs lying in the nest, and every morning she would run out to see if the little birds had come. One morning

she came running into the house crying, "Oh, grandma, they've come! Three little bits of birdies without any feathers at all, and such big mouths! They must be so cold, grandma, without a single feather; couldn't I take my dollie's blanket and cover them up?"

How grandma laughed! "No indeed," she said, "you would frighten them almost to death! The mother bird will keep them warm with her wings until their feathers grow." So Edna watched them day after day, and saw the papa bird feed them and the mother bird take care of them, and she called them "my birdies."

Then there was the strawberry bed in the garden, where she used to hunt for the ripe red berries, and enjoy eating some of the treasures which she found.

After a while mamma came to take her little girl away with her. So Edna said good-by to the beautiful garden and birds, and they went back to the dusty city, where there were no trees or green grass to see, and no birdies to watch.

When Thanksgiving came, grandma sent for them to come and make her another visit. Then Edna was so happy! She longed so much to see the flowers and birds again, and to taste the strawberries, too; for she was a little bit of a girl and thought that she should find the country just as she had left it.

So on the morning after they arrived, Edna ran out into the garden to get some pretty flowers for mamma. Such lovely roses and pansies as grandma always had! But when she looked about, not a single flower did she see! Only dry stalks standing in their places,—not even a sweet alyssum was to be seen. Next, Edna looked for the strawberry bed, and that was nowhere to be found either.

How strange it was and how queerly everything looked! No green grass, and no leaves on the trees! Everything was gone!

Then Edna remembered her birds and ran to see if they were gone too. "I haven't seen a birdie since I came," she thought, "and that's very strange, because there were ever so many before." Sure enough, the nest was still there, but no birds,—they were gone too!

Then Edna began to cry, and ran into the house, sobbing as if her heart would break.

"Why, Edna, what's the matter?" said mamma.

"Oh!" cried Edna, "the flowers and the strawberries and the leaves are all gone, and my birdies, too!"

Then mamma took the little girl in her lap, and told her gently that it was true they were gone, but that they would come back with another summer.

"Just think," said mamma, "how cold it would be for the poor birds if they stayed here! and there would be nothing for them to eat. But now they have gone to a country where it is always warm, and where there will be plenty of food for them. The flowers and strawberries are only asleep, dear. The summer has been so long that they are very tired, so they go fast asleep under the leaves, but in the spring they will wake up and blossom again as bright as ever."

Edna felt better then and smiled a little. "Will my birdies come back?" she asked.

"Yes," said mamma, "they are not really gone, you will see."

Sure enough, when the summer came again, and Edna went to grandma's, there were the flowers and fruit and birds all back again, and Edna was very glad to see them all. Even the trees had fresh green leaves. "But," thought Edna, "I wonder where the brown leaves are that were lying about on the ground last fall. Everything else has come back, so they must be somewhere."

Just then Edna's mother came walking down the path. Edna was sitting on the grass close beside a flower bed, so her mother came and sat there, too; as they sat there talking Edna asked what had become of all the old autumn leaves which had been lying about on the ground when she was at grandma's last time.

Her mother picked a big purple pansy and, holding it up where Edna could look right into its beautiful face, said: "Would you like to have the pansy tell you about that?"

"Oh, yes," said Edna with delight.

Then her mother began to talk as if the pansy was speaking: "I can tell you where the dried leaves are; they fell on the ground

in the fall and made a nice blanket to keep the flowers warm all winter. Then the rain fell and soaked the leaves until they became almost like the earth itself. In a little while some one came and planted seeds, and tiny plants sprang up from them; but we needed something to eat to make us grow strong and tall, you know, and it happened that the leaves made just the food that we needed, so they fed us and we grew stronger and taller until we blossomed as you see us now."

"Oh!" cried Edna, "I'm so glad that everything comes back again and nothing is lost! It makes me so glad!"

WILLIE'S VISIT TO THE SEASHORE.

BY ALICE LOTHERINGTON.

Willie lived in a big city with his papa and mamma. He was only six years old, but was a great help about the house.

He went to the store, played with sister Sue, rocked the cradle when baby George was cross, and did so many little things to help mamma that she called him her "busy little man."

When papa came home at night, he was sure to find his slippers and easy chair ready for him, put there by Willie's loving little hands.

Sometimes papa took his boy for a ride on his car.

Willie loved to get on a seat as near as he could to the locomotive and watch the engine.

"Puff, puff, puff, chuck, chuck, chuck," went the engine, as if it said: "Look out, here I come!"

Sometimes the engineer would blow the whistle. Then Willie would put his hands over his ears and look at papa.

As summer came on the roses in Willie's cheeks began to fade. "This will never do," said papa, patting the little fellow's cheeks. "Willie must go to grandpa's. I'll write tonight."

In less than a week grandpa was at the house, ready to take his grandson home with him.

When Willie saw the big, blue ocean, his brown eyes opened wide in wonder. It was not long before the salt air and sea bathing brought the roses back to the little boy's cheeks, and he was soon strong again.

What fun he had playing in the sand! Such deep caves and wells he dug, and fine houses and castles he built! How he often wished that sister Sue was with him!

One day grandpa asked Willie if he would like a row on the creek.

Of course he would. What boy would not like to go with his grandpa?

They were soon in the boat, and while

grandpa rowed, Willie leaned over the side and looked at the bright shells, pretty pebbles, and little fishes in the water.

He was just about to put out his hand to catch a piece of seaweed floating by, when he felt something pinch his foot.

"Oh, oh!" he cried, "what's that?" There it is, again." And the little boy's face grew very red

"Why," said grandpa, looking in the bottom of the boat, "it's a crab!" and grandpa picked it up by the back. "He can't hurt now."

"What an ugly looking fellow!" exclaimed Willie. "Throw him overboard, please."

"Let's look at him first," said grandpa. "See, he has eight legs and two claws or hands, one of which is much larger than the other and very strong. With this claw he digs his house, gets his food, and pinches people."

"Digs his house?" laughed Willie, "oh, grandpa!"

"Yes, Willie, digs his house in the sand when the tide is low; and, more than that,

he makes a long hall, a bedroom to sleep in, and a pantry for his food."

"What does he eat?" asked the boy.

"Flies, ants, little insects, in fact, almost anything he can get. He will even eat seaweed."

Just then crabbie tried to pinch grandpa's hand.

"What funny eyes the crab has," exclaimed Willie; "see how he pushes them out."

"His eyes are on little pegs which he can push in and out as he pleases," was the reply. "He is very careful of his eyes, for he knows that if he loses an eye, it will be a whole year before he has a new one."

"If he loses an eye, will another one grow?" asked Willie.

"Yes," was the answer.

"Is a crab a fish?" asked the boy.

"It is called a shell fish," said grandpa. "Baby crabs change their shells very often because they grow so fast. Just like a little boy that I know," and grandpa looked at Willie.

"When the crab gets older, he only changes his coat in the springtime, and, when he is fully grown, he keeps his shell, which grows thicker and thicker year by year."

"What are crabs good for?" asked Willie.

"To eat," was the answer. "They also help to keep the ocean and seashore clean."

"I wonder if I could take hold of the crab," asked Willie, looking at grandpa.

"If you take him by the back as I do he can't hurt you," said grandpa.

Willie tried, but his hand slipped and he caught hold of the crab's leg.

Crabbie gave a jump and before Willie knew what had happened, was swimming down the creek, and Willie was left with part of a crab's leg in his hand.

Grandpa had to laugh at the expression on Willie's face, as he looked at the leg.

"Oh! I'm so sorry," said the boy.

"And the crab is so glad to get away," said grandpa.

"I didn't mean to break its leg," said Willie.

"You didn't break it, my boy. The crab

broke it himself. A crab can break off a leg when he pleases and a new one will soon grow in its place.

"And now I think it must be near dinner time, so we had better start for home," said grandpa, as he headed the boat for the shore.

The summer passed quickly, and one morning early in September whom should Willie see coming up the road but papa, mamma, sister Sue, and the baby!

How much Willie had to tell. Mamma said that he was a regular chatterbox.

"Well, I see the roses are back," said papa, "and somebody is getting too big for his clothes. I wonder if my little boy is ready to go home?"

This was a hard question for Willie to answer.

But when grandpa said he was to come again next summer and bring sister with him, he was quite contented to go home.

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